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Buddhism in the Tamil Country

T. N. VASUDEVA RAO, M.A., M.Litt.
Professor of History, Presidency College,
Madras.

ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY
ANNAMALAINAGAR
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FOREWORD

Dr. K. K. PILLAY, M. A., D. LITT., D. PHIL. (OXON.)
Director, Institute of Traditional Cultures
University of Madras,
Madras-5.

I am happy to write a Foreword to this useful book 'Buddhism in the Tamil Country' written by Thiru T. N. Vasudeva Rao. Though originally written years ago for his M. Litt. Degree of the Annamalai University, he has taken care to bring the work uptodate by consulting later publications.

The history of Buddhism in India is a fascinating study. A religion which originated in this country practically disappeared while it has had a remarkable growth in the countries of South Asia and the Far East. Burma, Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand, Laos and Kampuchea, not to speak of China and Japan have witnessed a great development of Buddhism. Why it disappeared from North India has been a subject of deep study, while in respect of South India it has not received the treatment it deserves.

The present book concentrates its attention on the history of Buddhism in the Tamil Country. Its origin, development, contribution to the history and culture of the Tamil country and its eventual decline are all systematically examined. Whether it was introduced by Asoka is examined and the author, after a careful analysis, concludes that the great Emperor was responsible for it; though there are negative pieces of evidence like the absence of reference to him in the Manimekalai, and the circumstance that Tamil Nadu is not mentioned in the Mahavamsa among the places to which Asoka had sent missions, it appears reasonable to agree with Thiru T. N. Vasudeva Rao that 'Buddhism must have been introduced first into the Tamil country by Asokan missionaries on their way to Ceylon'.

The history of Buddhism in the Tamil Country during the epoch of the Kalabhras and later under the Pallavas is clearly described, meeting certain controversies raised by some writers, with courage and conviction. Generally it is believed that about the seventh century A. D. Buddhism declined in the Tamil country, the main basis being the reference of Hiuen-Tsang and the growth of the Bhakthi movement. The special contribution of the author of this book is that Buddhism survived in certain parts of Tamil Nadu down to the 12th and 13th centuries A. D. From the Leiden Grant (A.D. 1044-46) it is learnt that Raja Rajan I the Chola emperor made an endowment to a Buddhist Vihara by a subordinate ruler of his time. Exemption of taxes was granted to certain Buddhist Viharas by Kulottunga I. Kanchi which was one of the earliest centres of Buddhism continued to be a seat of Buddhist learning even in the 14th Century A. D. There were vestiges of Buddhist temples in the 16th century A.D.

It is notable that Chaitanya is said to have visited South India about A. D. 1510 and argued with some exponents of Buddhists, probably somewhere in Arcot.

The contribution of Buddhism to Tamil literature is appropriately stressed. Moreover in the history of Sanskritisation of South India Buddhism played its role. Perhaps in respect of rural administration the influence of the Brahmin chaturvedimangalams was greater than those of the Buddhist village organisations.

The book is the product of a systematic study of the sources. The author has brought to bear a balanced outlook on the study and he has presented the matter in a lucid style. It is hoped that more works from his pen will follow this.

June 23, 1979 — K. K. PILLAY

Preface

This thesis is the product of two years' study and research in the Annamalai University during 1949–51 when I was working as a Research Student in the History Department under the guidance of Professor R. Sathianathaier. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to him for his valuable guidance and useful suggestions. I am also indebted to Sri E. S. Varadarāja Iyer, Lecturer in Tamil, Annamalai University and Sri C. Thirumeni a Research Student in Tamil for elucidating some portions in Tamil literature.

The sources for the study of this subject being the same as those for the study of General Indian History and hence of a vast and varied nature, a separate and critical survey of the sources has not been attempted and this point of view has been indicated, wherever necessary in the footnotes and in the body of the thesis. In this connection I must say that Tamil literary source was of very substantial help to me.

The following distinctive features of the thesis have received full treatment:

(1) that the introduction of Buddhism in the Tamil country was not pre-Aśokan but due to the missionary efforts of that king and that it was first introduced in the mainland and subsequently in the neighbouring island of Ceylon and not *vice versa*.

(2) that during the age of *Tirukkuṟaḷ* Buddhism had made considerable progress in the Tamil country and that in the *Kuṟaḷ* might be perceived certain traces of Buddhist influence.

(3) that Buddhism occupied an important status and enjoyed wide popularity and support in the Śaṅgam Age as vouchsafed by the twin epics *Śilappadikāram* and *Maṇimēkhalai*.

(4) that while some of the early Pallava monarchs were not hostile to Buddhism the Kaḷabhras were themselves Buddhists who patronised that religion and gave it a large measure of support and encouragement to the detriment of other faiths, and that the age of the Kaḷabhras might more appropriately be called the heyday of Buddhism in the Tamil country.

(5) that during the 7th century A. D. Buddhism did not show any symptoms of marked decline in the Tamil country as has been generally supposed and that though in certain localities the symptoms of decline had appeared just then, the overall position of Buddhism was sound and satisfactory as in the preceding centuries, and the decline was conspicuous only a century later.

(6) that the Kāñchī region (Toṇḍamaṇḍalam) was a stronghold for Buddhism ever since the day of its inception there and it continued to be so until the 8th and 9th centuries A. D.

(7) that the vestiges of Buddhism lingered in the Tamil country till as late as the 13th and 14th centuries.

(8) that Tamil literature owes a deep debt of gratitude to the Buddhists of the Tamil country, but for whose unceasing labours in the literary field Tamil literature would not have been what it is to-day.

(9) that rural administration in the south, under the later Pallavas and the Chōḷas, must have received a fillip from Buddhism and must have been, to a certain extent, moulded by Buddhist influence.

Fresh information pertaining to the subject made available through latest researches has been incorporated in the thesis wherever necessary.

The author is deeply grateful to the authorities of the Annamalai University, particularly to the revered Vice-chancellor Dr. S. Chandrasekhar for having taken up the thesis for publication.

Annamalainagar,

1st August, 1977. **T. N. VASUDEVARAO**

Guide to Transliteration

அ	a
ஆ	ā
இ	i
ஈ	i
உ	u
ஊ	ū
எ	e
ஏ	ē
ஐ	ai
ஒ	o
ஓ	ō
ஔ	au

க்1	k
க்2	kh
க்3	g
க்4	gh
ங்	ṅ
ச்1	ch
ச்2	chh
ச்3	j
ச்4	jh
ஞ்	ñ
ட்1	ṭ
ட்2	th
ட்3	ḍ
ட்4	dh
ண்	ṇ
த்1	t
த்2	th
த்3	d
த்4	dh
ந் or ன்	n
ப்1	p
ப்2	ph
ப்3	b
ப்4	bh
ம்	m
ய்	y
ர்	r
ல	l
வ்	v
ழ்	ḻ
ள்	ḷ
ற்	ṟ

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CHAPTER 1

Buddhism in the Tamil Country in the Pre-Christian Era

The history of Buddhism in the Tamil country dates as far back as the days of Aśōka who is to be credited with having introduced that religion in that area. There is yet considerable difference of opinion regarding the origin and spread of Buddhism in the Tamil country and scholars are not wanting who hold that, although Buddhism was not unknown to the Tamil country it is difficult to believe that it was the work of Aśōka. It would be my endeavour here to point out that the introduction of Buddhism in the Tamil country was undoubtedly not pre-Aśōkan and that it was due to the missionary activities of that king. Those who contend that South Indian Buddhism has nothing to do with Aśōka base their arguments on the fact that had it been introduced in to this region by the efforts of Aśōka's missionaries, reference would have been certainly made to such an important incident in the literature of the country. They further point out that Aśōka's name is conspicuous by its absence in such a professedly Buddhist work as the *Maṇi nēkh ılai* or in any other literary work datable to that period, which on the other hand refers to some important Buddhist centres in this region, the monuments therein and to northern rulers and saints.[1] This is taken to mean that Aśōka had nothing to do with the south. True, there is not even a single reference to Aśōka in the

1. Dr. S. K. Iyengar: *The Buddhism of Maṇimēkhalai* in the *Buddhistic Studies*, by B. C. Law. P. 1.

Maṇimēkhalai and this omission is not very surprising, regard being had to the fact that the *Maṇimēkhalai* is a production of a later age. It is separated from Asoka by about five centuries and besides, there is no occasion in the epic to deal with the history of the origin and spread of Buddhism. The epic deals with the renunciation of the heroine and expounds the Buddhist philosophy and it would be too much to expect any reference to the past history of Buddhism, much less to its origin in this region. The view that South Indian tradition knows nothing whatever of Asoka[2] is historically untenable, for mention must be made here of traditions connecting Asoka with the south referred to by the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang who mentions that Asoka had erected topes at the various spots where the Buddha had preached and admitted members into his Order, and that he noticed a stupa about 100 feet high built by King Asoka in the city of Kāñchi.[3] He also speaks of the remains of an old monastery built by Asoka's brother Mahēndra on the east side of the capital. That Asoka was associated with Kāñchi in early days is further strengthened by the fact that mention is made of one Asokavarman as one of the early Pallava kings in the mythical portion of the later Pallava inscriptions and Hultzsch's interpretation that this Asokavarman is only "a modification of the ancient Maurya king Asoka" appears to be correct. The claim of having this great Maurya as ancestor of a line is to be found not only in the traditional history of Kāñchi but also in that of Kashmir.[4] At best we can regard this account of the pilgrim as a record of what the people of Kāñchi had to say in the 7th century A. D. concerning the

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2. Ibid. P. 1

3. Beal : *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. II, P. 230

4. *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. XIV, P. 149

origin of Buddhism in that place. The truth of the pilgrim's account cannot be assumed without subjecting it to scrutiny. But it is not improbable that at the time of Asoka Buddhist stupas came to be erected at Kāñchi.

Secondly it may be argued that no mention is made of any Tamil kingdom in the Mahāvamsa account of the list of places to which missions were sent by Asoka soon after the conclusion of the Third Council held at Pāṭaliputra for the purpose of spreading the teachings of the "Enlightened One." The Mahāvamsa account runs thus: "When the Thera Moggaliputta, the illuminator of the religion of the conqueror had brought the (third) council to an end and when, looking into the future, he had beheld the founding of the religion in adjacent countries, (then) in the month of Kattika he sent forth Theras, one here and one there. The Thera Majjhāntika he sent to Kāsmira and Gāndhāra, the Thera Mahādēva he sent to Mahishamaṇḍala. To Vanavāsa he sent the Thera named Rakkhita and to Aparāntaka, the Thera named Dhammarakkhita; but the Thera Mahārakkhita he sent into the country of Yona. He sent the Thera Majjhima to the Himalayan country and to Suvannabhumi he sent the two Theras Sona and Uttara. The great Thera Mahinda, the Theras Itthiya, Uttiya, Sambala and Bhaddhasāla his disciples, these five theras he sent forth with the charge. "Ye shall found in the lovely island of Lanka the lovely religion of the conqueror."[5] In this recital of names of countries to which missions were sent, we do not find any that could well be located in South India proper, and the places referable to the country south of the Vindhyas stopped with Vanavāsa, all the other places being obviously north of Vanavāsa excepting Mahishamaṇḍala which may be identified with modern Mysore. This identification gains support from the fact that references in

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5. *Mahāvamsa*: Geiger's Translation, Chap. 12, p. 94

early Tamil Literature[6] to Erumaiyūr, which is an exact rendering of Mahishamaṇḍala show that it is identical with the present Mysosre State. Dr. Rice is also in favour of this identification and suggests that Mysore, properly Maisūru derives its name from 'Mahisha' reduced in Kannada to 'Maisa', and 'Ūru' being Kannada equivalent to town or country.[7] This term has been commonly understood as meaning the Mysore country, not of course the existing Mysore State but the tract or territory of which Mysore was then the principal town. But Dr. S. K. Iyengar is not in favour of this identification and thinks that it represents a region on the banks of the Narmada and hence places the Vanavāsa country (the modern Banavāsi in South Kanara) as the southern most limit of Asoka's missionary activity.[8] Dr. Fleet also is not in favour of this identification and says that any such appellation as 'Mahisha maṇḍala' denoting the Mysore territory or even the country round the city of Mysore could have originated only after 1600 A. D.[9] and identifies it with the territroy of the Mahishakas on

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6. Māmūlanār in *Ahanānūṛu* (Verses 115, 252) mentions Erumaināḍu as one among the countries he visited and describes it as being to the west of the Tamil country. Nakkirar tells of a war of the Pāṇḍyan King Neḍuñjeḻiyan against a League of seven kings of whom one was "Erumaiyūran." And he is said to be of Vaḍuga descent, a reference to the northeners who speak Kannada the language of Mysore. (Rice: *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol. III, 1911, p. 66)

7. *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, 1911, p. 59

8. Dr. S. K. Iyengar: '*Some contributions of South India to Indian Culture*, pp. 37–38; also '*Beginnings of South Indian History*, pp. 74–77

9. *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol. III, 1911, p. 58.

the banks of the river Narmada with their capital city at Mahishmati.[10]

Again the absence of any mention of Tamil kingdoms in this list cannot be taken by itself to be a sound argument in support of the theory that Buddhism was introduced into this region by agencies other than those of Asoka, for the evidencs supplied to us by his edicts are decisive and specific. Rock Edict II and XIII make express mention of the many independent and quasi-independent states both on the borders of the empire and beyond to which Asoka had sent his missionaries to propagate the Dhamma and it is here that the independent kingdoms of the Chōḻas, Pāṇḍyas, the Satīyaputra and Kēralaputra are precisely referred to. This would help to expel all doubts as to whether Asoka had any part to play in the introduction of Buddhism in this territory.

Thirdly, a more positive evidence is given in favour of this opinion dissociating Asoka from the spread of Buddhism in the south. The great centres of Buddhist activity are enumerated in another context in the Mahāvamsa. The Ceylon ruler Duttagamāni Abhaya held a great congregation on the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the Mahāvihāra that he constructed (1st century B. C.). And to this assemblage he had issued invitations to all the leading Buddhists from the various Buddhist centres of repute. In response to this invitation there assembled the brethren of the Holy Order of as many as fourteen centres, the centres being: Rājagriha, Isitapatna, the Deer Park in Benares, Jetarāma Vihāra in Srāvasti, Mahāvana in Vaisali, Ghōsitarāma in Kausāmbi, Dakkhinagiri Vihāra in Ujjain in Malwa, Asokarama in Pāṭaliputra, Kāshmir, Pallavabhogga, Alasanda of Yonas, Vindhyan mountain regions, Bōdhgaya, Vanavāsa and lastly the

10. Ibid, p. 65.

Kelasa Vihāra of Amarāvathi or Ellora.[11] These were centres of holy reputation and whether the representatives actually attended or not is a different question. Almost all the places mentioned in the list are Buddhist centres of importance in North India with the exception of two or three which may be considered as belonging to any region south of the Vindhyas. Thus it will be noticed here again that Vanavāsi, which is Banavāsa referred to above, figures as the southernmost region. So also Kelasa may be identified with Amarāvathi rather than with any other place further south; and the third is Pallava-bhogga, which may, with plausibility, be identified with the Pallava country.[12] Dr. S. K. Iyengar is doubtful about this identification on the ground that the Pallavas were quite unknown about that time in the south and is disposed to locate it somewhere in the north-west and west. On the basis of this he says that this detailed list of Buddhist centres excludes the Tamil country altogether. But his objection may be answered thus. This particular territory in question must have been occupied by the Pallavas during the time when these chronicles were written and it is probable that instead of referring to it by its original name, whatever it be, the chronicles must have used the appellation current during their age. Even assuming that the farthest southern limit does not go beyond Vanavāsi it is not difficult to understand this position. The omission here of any Tamil kingdoms may be due to the fact that no particular centre in this region had attained to that degree of celebrity that the other invited centres had or it may be suggested that even in those days the Buddhism as prevalent in the Tamil kingdoms must have been something distinct, distinct to the degree of

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11. Dr. S. K. Iyengar: *Some contributions of South India to Indian Culture*, P. 38.

12. Dr. S. K. Iyengar: The Buddhism of Maṇimēkhalai in *Buddhistic Studies* edited by B. C. Law, P. 5.

hostility, from the Buddhism that prevailed in Ceylon. This latter suggestion appears probable in the light of the reference made in the *Mahāvamsa* to the votaries of Buddhism who came from the Tamil kingdoms, especially from the Chōḷa country, as "schismatic sectaries". It seems the prejudice arose out of the fact that the Buddhists of Ceylon belonged to the orthodox Theravāda school whereas those of the Tamil country were considered as belonging to the Mahasangika school. Therefore the omission need not necessarily be due to the fact that Buddhism was unknown in these regions.[13] Another explanation for this omission is also possible. In the second century B. C. a number of Tamil invasions of Ceylon hostile to Buddhism are on record. A careful study of the Buddhist texts would reveal that the Tamils were a fighting people always engaged in constant strife with the Ceylonese and thus the relationship of the Tamil country with Ceylon was generally one of hostility[14] though it was not always the case as we are going to see in subsequent pages. The rulers and usurpers that

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13. Ibid. pp. 6-7

14. It was after the reign of Devanampiya Tissa that the incursions of the Tamil kings into Ceylon commenced as a result of the incompetence of his successors. Duttagāmani is said to have fought with the Tamil invaders and killed many of them and another king Duttagāmani Abhaya is said to have defeated 32 Ḍamila kings. (Indian Culture, Vol. III, pp. 386-9). Mention is also made of a Tamil chief of noble descent belonging to the Chōḷa country who invaded Ceylon, seized the kingdom and ruled for 44 years. He is named in the *Mahāvamsa* as Ēlara but is better known to Tamil tradition as Ēlēlasingam. From the *Mahāvamsa* account we can understand that this usurper continued to be a Hindu and never adopted Buddhism. The *Mahāvamsa* considers him a heretic.

came from the Tamil country, inimical as they were to the Ceylonese, it would be unreasonable to expect that any invitation would be extended to an enemy kingdom[15] for participation in a religious assembly.

Accepting the identification of the Pallavabhogga in the list with the Pallava country, the inference may be drawn that Buddhism was not only known in the Tamil country in general and Kāñchi region in particular in those days but also had attained such a respectable degree of prominence as to deserve an invitation for participation in the congregation of the holy monks of different centres held in Ceylon. Above all, in the centuries preceding the Christian era Buddhism was prevalent in the Tamil country as is evident from Asoka's inscriptions which make unambiguous reference to the Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya kingdoms as falling under the influence of his religious propaganda.

As mentioned at the outset it remains to be proved that the introduction of Buddhism into the Tamil country was not pre-Asokan and that it was due to his missionery activities.

The theory that Buddhism could not have been unknown to the Pāṇḍya country long before Asoka is maintained by two untenable assumptions. We shall presently discuss them. The first is that of the Ceylonese tradition which maintains that not only Gotama himself but also the three preceding Buddhas were miraculously transported to Ceylon and made arrangements for its conversion. Gotama is said to have paid no less

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15. It seems that it is this religious hostility between the two kingdoms that has been responsible for the general hostility in their normal relation with each other. (S. K. Iyengar's *some Contributions of South India to Indian Culture*, p. 82).

than three visits to that island.[16] And in view of the proximity of the Pāṇḍya country to Ceylon there is all probability of the faith having penetrated into the southernmost region of south India. But this is purely a figment of the imagination of the authors of the chronicle and all personal visits of the Buddha are obviously impossible, perhaps invented to enhance the glory of the island! Similarly the tradition associating the Buddha with Kāñchi may also be dismissed as purely fictitious and here the earliest literature of the Buddhists, the Pāli Canon, provides us valuable evidence vouchsafing that Buddhism during the life time of its founder did not extend beyond the Madhyadesa, its cradle. The early *Pali literature,* being purely canonical texts relating in most cases to rules and regulations of conduct of the monks, we could hardly get any narrative of purely historical or geographical nature, and whatever information, historical and geographical, that could be gathered is incidental and therefore generally reliable. It is from the *Vinayapitaka* that we are able to get some information regarding the gradual spread of Buddhism mainly within the borders of the Middle country. We find in it an accurate description of the four boundaries of the Madhyadesa as understood by the Buddhists of the time, and as early Buddhism is mainly concerned with Buddha's life and propagation of his teaching early Buddhist literature abounds with geographical information mainly of the Madhyadesa within the confines of which he limited his activities. Rājagriha, the capital of the Maghadan Kingdom with the city of Champa on the east, Vesali on the north, Benares on the west and Srāvasti on the north to this, were the scenes of Buddha's activities and Ceylon and South India are nowhere mentioned in the *Pali Literature.*[17] During the life time of Gautama his teaching had not spread

16. Sir Charles Elliot: *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. III, p. 13

17. E. J. Thomas : *The Life of Buddha*, pp. 13–14.

much beyond the Kingdoms of Maghada and Kosala.[18] Thus from the itinerary of the Buddha it could be gathered that there is absolutely no basis for his alleged visit to Kāshmir or Ceylon [19] and the spread of Buddhism before Asoka was confined to a few towns and villages situated in the central belt of India from Aṅga to Avanti[20]. From this account one thing emerges clearly that the assumption that the southern countries must have had a fair knowledge of Buddhism even before Asoka, is quite untenable and thus the theory of the pre-Asokan origin of Buddhism in the Tamil country automatically falls to the ground. Even up till the middle of the 3rd century B. C. it remained confined to the middle country of the Buddhists and it needed the practical idealism and proselytising zeal of an Emperor like Asoka backed by the entire machinery of Mauryan administration for raising the religion of the Sākyamuni to the status of an All India faith and pushing it yet further beyond the limits of his vast empire.

The second as umption in favour of the pre-Asokan origin of Buddhism in this region is based on the Sinhalese tradition of Vijaya's advent in Ceylon. If the Sinhalese tradition could be believed, the first contact of Ceylon with North India was the expedition of Vijaya to Ceylon on the very day of Buddha's Nirvāṇa.[21] The probability of Vijaya being a contemporary of the Buddha is indicated by the fact that Pāṇḍuvasudeva, a nephew of Vijaya married a daughter of the cousin of Buddha.

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18. K. G. Saunders : *Story of Buddhism*, p. 45.

19. Prof. R. Sathianathaier : *Studies in the Ancient History of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam*, p. 2

20. N. Dutt : *Aspects of Mahāyāna Buddhism and its Relation to Hinayāna*, p. 14.

21 *Indian Antiquary* Vol. XL, 1911, p. 209

This Vijaya is mentioned as belonging to the Sākya race and this race could not have been slow to adopt the tenets and teachings of one of the scions of the race. Hence it is not unreasonable to suppose that Vijaya could have carried to Ceylon the new belief. Not only that, it is argued that Buddhism could not have been unknown in the Deccan especially in the Pāṇḍya country long before Asoka on the ground that there was free communication between the two kingdoms as they were situated near each other. Vijaya is said to have landed in Ceylon from Lata or Gujarat with 700 of his followers and thereafter overcame the Yakshas in the island and took possession of the whole territory It is also said that he married a daughter of the Pāṇḍyan king in South India to whom he had sent a special embassy asking for the hand of his daughter and a number of women for his followers. This account shows that Ceylon was known to the Pāṇḍya country even in the 5th century B.C. and it is not too much to expect that Buddhism was at least known, if not actually practised, by the people of the Pāṇḍya country in view of the fact that the new faith had already been carried to Ceylon through Vijaya. The colonisation of Ceylon by a group of immigrants from India may be taken as historical and perhaps also the name of Vijaya as their leader. But not even the question from which part of India the colonists came can be answered in an unobjectionable manner. The chronology is certainly arranged with the purpose of arriving at a chronological coincidence of Vijaya's landing in Ceylon with the year of the Buddha Nirvana. And lastly, Buddhism during that time did not attain such a conspicuous stage even in Northern India. Moreover there is no evidence forthcoming from the Tamil country to prove its reception of Buddhism during such an early period and without any corroborative evidence the whole argument falls to the ground.

Thus dismissing these two hypotheses as clean untenable we may now examine the view that the conversion of the Tamil

country to Buddhism was the work of Asoka, thanks to his active propaganda and the pious zeal of his missionaries and monks like Mahinda and Aritta.

It would not be out of place in this context to mention a few words about the two important sources indispensable for a student of history to arrive at a correct picture of Asoka's work as a devout propagandist in the cause of Buddhism viz., the Ceylonese chronicles–the *Dipavamsa and the Mahāvamsa*. The *Dipanamsa* is assigned to the 4th century A. D. and the *Mahavamsa* to the 6th and they were compiled on the basis of older documents. Geiger in his introduction to his translation of the *Mahāvamsa* has discussed the trust-worthiness of these chornicles and has defended them against "underserved distrust and exaggerated scepticism" of scholars like Dr. Smith. The *Dīpavamsa* and *the Mahāvamsa* are a mixture of legends and historical truths and they must be used, of course, with caution and with criticism and it is however not too difficult to separate the two elements. And it would not be unreasonable to proceed on the assumption that the chronicles "do attempt to give what their authors accepted as a true narration of events mixed up of course with all that their pious fancies depicted as the necessary accompaniments of the successful adoption of the true doctrine."[22] The account given by them is by no means infallible and the longer the interval between the time of the events and that of the narration, the greater is the possibility of error and the more will be the influence of legend noticeable. It may be maintained that the compilers of the two chronicles did not arbitrarily invent the narratives but took their information from a source which not only contained legends and fables but also good historical

22. Dr. S. K. Iyengar : *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol. IV, p. 130

tradition prevailing in India and we have hardly any reason for calling in question the genuineness of the main facts. It is worthy of note that the tradition supplied by these chronicles is also supported by external testimony like the Brāhmanical tradition and the Edicts of Aśōka. Prof. Rhys Davids in arguing in favour of the chronicles observes: "To call the chronicles the mendacious fictions of unscrupulous monks is to show a grave want of appreciation. Just as in the case of Megasthenes and of the English chronicles it would be unreasonable to expect that sort of historical training which is of quite recent growth in Europe ...... the opinion of scholars as to the attiude to be adopted towards such work is quite unanimous. The hypothesis of deliberate lying, of conscious forgery is generally discredited. What we find in such chronicles is not indeed sober history ... but neither is it pure fiction. It is good evidence of opinion as held at the time when it was written."[23]

Coming to the other important source viz. Aśōka's inscriptions they are of supreme value to a student of history. From them could be gathered a true picture of Aśōka's personality and greatness. Though they are essentially religious documents they throw abundant light on many aspects of his life and reign. The edicts speak about the whole of India and sometimes take us beyond her frontiers and they afford us a very valuable clue to Aśōka's religion and his exertions to spread it in the different neighbouring countries. It will appear on a close and comparative study of both the sources, the legends and inscriptions of Aśōka, that both should be utilised for the writing of a complete Aśōkan history and the chronicles furnish us a fairly complete set of dates in the life and history of Aśōka which readily fits in with the fragments of chronological schemes found in the edicts and other sources. [24]

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23. T. W. Rhys Davids: *Buddhist India*, P. 274.

24. R. K. Mookerji: Authenticity of Aśōkan Legends in *Buddhistic Studies*—Edited by B. C. Law, P. 547.

So far as recorded history goes, Aśōka, who has been called "an Alexander with Buddism for his Hellas" an "unselfish Napoleon with *mettam* or benevolence in the place of la glorie" and the "Constantine of Buddhism"[25] for all practical purposes became the pioneer of the great movement of Buddhist expansion in and outside India, and it was he who gave to the religion a national as well as an international character and if we can give credence to what his inscriptions say and what later authorities like Hiuen Tsang have to say, there is no doubt that he must have been solely responsible in spreading the doctrine "as far as Northern Bengal in the East, Nēpal and Kāshmir in the North, Gāndhāra and Kāmboja in the North-west, Saurāshṭra in the West and Ceylon in the South."[26] We shall now examine the famous edicts of Aśōka and see what light they throw on this question of the spread of Buddhism in the south and in Ceylon. But before dealing with this problem we shall discuss the question of the southern boundary of Aśōka's Empire.

The territories within Aśōka's dominions and those outside his empire are clearly distinguished in his edicts. The former he denotes by the term *vijita* thereby implying that the royal realm which he held was held as though by the right of conquest[27] and the latter by the word *prachamtesu* or Antās i.e. "independent frontagers", those who are not his subjects, but of countries outside bordering on the limits of his dominions.[28] The antās are also described as unsubdued in Kaliṅga Rock Edict I and referred to in R. E. II where the alternative term *pratyanta* is also used and this edict shows that by the term

25. K. G. Saunders: *The Story of Buddhism*, P. 51.
26. B. C. Law: *New Indian Antiquary*, Vol. II, 1939–40, p.695
27. *B. M. Barua*: *Aśōka and his Inscriptions*, *p.* 63
28. R. K. Mockerji: Aś*ōka*, P. 131, footnote

Antās Aśōka meant peoples outside his dominions both in India and beyond *viz* the Chōḷas, the Pāṇḍyas, the Śatiyaputra and Kēraḷaputra.[29] It is then evident from Aśōka's own statements that we have to distinguish between the territories entirely under his direct rule or his Viceroys and those occupied by the semi-independent tribal states as mentioned in Rock Edict XIII. To this latter group belong the southern kingdoms of the Chōḷas, Pāṇḍyas, Śatiyaputra and Kēraḷaputra mentioned in Rock Edicts II and XIII which place them as beyond the pale of the Mauryan Empire, whereas Rock Edict V says that Dharmamahāmātras were employed among the subject peoples-Yavanas Kāmbojas, Gāndhāras, Rāshṭrikas and Pitinikas. For long it was held doubtful that the references to the Chōḷa, Pāṇḍya and Kērala in Aśōka's edicts had anything more in them than a mere boast on the part of the Buddhist Emperor. The discovery of his edicts at Siddhapura, Brahmagiri and Jatiṅga Rāmēsvara hill in Mysore in 1892 and later at Maski in the Nizam's dominions and at Yerragudi and Rājulamandagiṅ in the Kurnool District lends support to the view that there was a southern province of Aśōka and in this regard the position taken by Smith is generally accepted by scholars: "The Tamil States extending to the extremity of the peninsula, and known as the Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya kingdoms, certainly were independent as were the Kēraḷaputra and Ṣatīyaputra States on the south western or Malabar Coast. The southern frontier of the empire may be described approximately as a line drawn from the mouth of the Peṇṇār river near Nellore on the eastern coast through Cuddappah and to the south of Chitāldoorg to the rive Kalyāṇapuri on the west coast".[30] And according to this a straight line across the peninsula immediately south of northern Mysore (N. Lat. 14°. 15' E. Long. 76°. 48') where three copies of Minor Rock Edicts are found would serve to demarcate the

29. *Ibid*, p. 167, footnote

30. Vincent Smith: *Early History of India*, P. 163

southernmost boundary of Aśōka's Empire, and Tamil literary sources also support this boundary limit. The Tamils marked out the limit of Tamil land at Pulicat and this is referred to in ancient Tamil literature as Vēṛkāḍu,[31] and is usually described as Vaḍukarmunai, the end of the Northerner's territory. The limit on the other side is given as the Tuḷu land. Further from Smith's reference it is implied that the northern boundary of the Tamil states is identical with the northern boundary of the Chōḷas and with the southern boundary of the Mauryan empire. But the early history of the Chōḷas clearly shows that even under Karikāla the Chōḷa kingdom did not extend upto the Pālār and it would be erreneous to identify the northern boundary of the Tamil country with that of the Chōḷa kingdom which "according to tradition comprised the land between two streams having the same name" (K. A. Nilakaṇṭa Śāstri) viz., North and South Veḷḷār.[32] So long as evidence to the contrary is not forthcoming the Chōḷas mentioned by Aśōka must be regarded as occupyign the region to the south of North Veḷḷār and their northern boundary and the southern boundary of the Mauryas are to be taken as the same.[33]

It is easy to identify the names of the Tamil kingdoms mentioned by Aśōka in Rock Edict II and XIII with the data supplied by Ptolemy and the author of the *Periplus*. Ptolemy speaks of two Chōḷa kingdoms, one represented by "Orthoura, the royal city of the Sornagos" comprised in Soretai.[34] The word Sor can easily be recognised to be the Tamil Sōra or

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31. Māmūlanār in *Kuṟumtogai*, Verse 11.
    S. K. Iyeṅgar's '*Beginnings of South Indian History*, P. 83
32. R. Sathianathier: *Studies in the Ancient History of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam*. p.3
33. *Ibid*, p. 4
34. D. R. Bhandarkar: *Aśōka*, p. 39; Cunningham-Ancient Geography of India-p. 543

Chora. Orthura has been identified by Cunningham with Uṟaiyūr near Trichinopoly. This was therefore the southern Chōḷa kingdom. The clue to the location of the northern Chōḷa kingdom is furnished by Ptolemy's remark that between Mt. Bettigo and Adeisathros are the Sorai nomads with 'Arkatos', the capital of Sora.[35] Arkatos, Caldwell identifies with modern Arcot. There were thus two Chōḷa kingdoms with capitals at Orthura and Arkatos. The existence of two Chōḷa kingdoms is also suggested by some versions of the Minor Rock Edicts of Asoka in which Chōḷa is mentioned in plural.

Orathoura and Arkatos have been identified respectively with Uragapura (Uṟaiyūr) and Arcot in North Arcot District. Though there can be no difficulty with regard to the identification of Orathoura with Uṟaiyūr, the identification of Arkatos with Arcot may not be easy of acceptance. There is now a place called Ārkkādu in the Tanjore District not far from Tanjore and referred to in some Sangam works(Naṟṟiṇai 190 and 227; Kuṟuntogai 258) and in early Chōḷa inscriptions as Ārkkāḍu and Ārkāttu Kūṟṟam (351 of 1907; 419 of 1912; 13 of 1914). It may be possible to identify the second Chōḷa capital with this Ārkādu than with Arcot, since Arcot in North Arcot District is a comparatively late town. If this identification is valid, then it may be taken that Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam region formed part of the Mauryan empire which might have extended upto the river Peṇṇār or Gadilam in the South Arcot District [35a].

As regards Pāṇḍyās, Ptolemy speaks of them as Pandinoi' and of 'Modoura' as "the royal city of Pāṇḍian." The Pāṇḍya country according to him included Tinnevelly on the south and he does not speak of two Pāṇḍya kingdoms as he does of the

35. Ibid, p.40

35-a. Dr. T.V.Mahalingam, *Kāñchipuram in Early South Indian History* pp-7-8

Chōḷas. But it seems that there was a separate Tāmraparṇya territory in the southern most part of the Deccan below that of the Pāṇḍyas on the east and Kēraḷaputras on the west–a fact which is well attested to by Hiuen Tsang[36] Ptolemy again mentions 'Kerobothros' (Kēraḷaputras) as rulers of Karoura and evidently they were lying to the west of the Chōḷas and Pāṇḍyas. The only remaining name is that of the Śatiyaputras which is a pivot of controversy and scholars have been much exercised as to the identification of this kingdom. The Śatiyaputra kingdom is identified by R. G. Bhandarkar with the kingdom situated along the Western Ghats and the Koṅkan coast on the strength of the existence of the Satpute families in these localities.[37] This could not be, because in the order in which the name has been enumerated it seems to have undoubtedly occupied the Tamil country. And Poona too, which locality he assigns to the Śatiyaputras is a far cry from Tamilnad. V. Smith holds that the Śatiyaputra may be either the Tuḷuva country or the region round about Śatyamaṅgalam.[38] The correspondence between Śatyamaṅgalam and Śatiyaputra is far fetched and requires more substantial evidence for proof. According to Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar Śatiyaputra refers to the region north of Cochin.[39] Among other interesting suggestions is the one connecting the Śatiyaputras with the locality

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36. Hiuen Tsang places 'Malayakuta' i.e.,the South Indian Tāmbapaṇṇi opposite to Simhala and below Drāviḍa. (B. M. Barua: *Aśōka and his Inscriptions* p.111) Probably Smith's identification of the Tāmbapaṇṇi of Aśōka's inscriptions with the Tāmraparṇi river region was strengthened by this. Samuel Beal - *Buddhist Records of the Western World* II P. 230.

37. *Indian Review*, 1909, p. 139

38. Vincent Smith: *Aśōka*. p. 161

39. Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar: *Beginnings of South Indian History*,p,.73

called Satyabhūmi occuring in the *Kēraḷōlpatti*.[40] The territory referred to is said to correspond to one of the political divisions of Malabar known as Kupaka and later as Koḷathunāḍu or the kingdom of the Kōla dynasty. And the Kōla line is a royal line of the Malabar coast. If we can give credence to the *Kēraḷōlpatti* then the problem of identification is automatically solved. We have then to take that Aśōka meant by Śatīyaputras the people occupying the Śatyabhūmi of *Kēraḷōlpatti* which is more or less the Koṅgu country of the Kōśar. (*Indian Culture*, p. 495). Prof. R. Sathianathier, assuming the order of the enumeration of these Tamil kingdoms to be geographical takes the Śatīyaputra country as a great country, its immediate neighbours on either side being the Pāṇḍyas and the Kēraḷaputras. Therefore he identifies this kingdom with Koṅgudēsa and proves it to be more suitable than the *Tuḷu country*.[41] *One scholar* goes to the extent of identifying it with the Kāñchī *region*.[42] He rejects Smith's identification on the ground that there is no evidence of that place (the Tuḷu country) having been the seat of a kingdom or people in Aśōka's time. His contention is that the *Mahābāshya* of Patañjali generally assignable to the middle of the 2nd century B. C. mentions Pāṇḍya, Chōḷa and Chēra kingdoms along with Kāñchīpura (*Mahābāshya IV*, 2 2). Just as Kāñchi is conspicuous by omission in the edicts, Śatīyaputra is omitted in the *Mahābāshya*. One may be inclined to ask whether the one could be identified with the other. Moreover there are also traditions on the Buddhist side about the flourishing state of Kāñchī in Aśōka's time. There is also strong evidence that the country round Kāñchīpuram was known as Satyavratakshētra. In the Mēlupāka grant of Mahādēva Sarasvathi we read,

40. E. J. Thomas: *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, July 1923, pp. 411–14

41. R. Sathianathier: *Studies in the Ancient History of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam*, pp. 4–5

42. *Indian Antiquary*, 1919. (February–March), p. 24

"*Satyavratanamāṅ Kita Kāñchī Divya Kṣetra*". [43] The same term is used in the Guruparampara of the Śaṅkarāchārya Matha as well as in that of Pimpaḻagiya Jeeyar, three generations from the great Rāmānujāchārya. On these grounds Mr. S. V. Veṅkaṭēswara establishes that the Śatīyaputra of Rock Edict II and Rock Edict XIII refers to the people or country having Kāñchīpuram as its capital. This theory seems plausible but we do not know quite definitely whether Kāñchī was enjoying the status of an independent kingdom when Aśōka was the ruler of Maghada.

One thing is certain that the Kōśars were reputed for speaking truth and had great regard for truth. The *Ahanānūṟu* testifies to this and the Kōśars are called in one Aham ode (ode 196) as "onṟu moḻikkōśar", (ஒன்று மொழிக் கோசர்) the Kōśars who were true to their word. Another ode in the *Aham* (262) is a piece of evidence to illustrate their regard for truth. It is reasonable to assume that all these tended to spread the fame of Kōśar for their *satya* or truth. And Aśōka who must have heard of these might have styled them 'Śatīyaputras'.[43a]

The *Tolkāppiyam*, the earliest extant work in Tamil refers to the three kingdoms of the Chōḷa, Chēra and Pāṇḍya only which shows that there was no fourth independent kingdom in the Tamil country. The *Śilappadikāram* on the other hand refers to a kingdom of the kōśar in addition to the three. The Kōśars are mentioned in the Śaṅgam literature

43. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XIII, p. 122. The Mēlupāḷa grant is one among the six grants belonging to the Śaṅkarā chārya matha at Kāñchipuram. It mentions the grant of a village by Mahādēva Sarasvathi, one of the Āchāryas of the Kāmakōti, Pītha, Sarasvathi being the appellation used for all the Āchāryas, to Rāma Śāstrin (Conjeevaram Plates of Krishṇadēva Rāya, No. 5).

43a. Burrow has identified the Satīyaputras with the Adihamāns of Tahadūr.

as a ruling line of a portion of Koṅgu nāḍu. It would be interesting to note that Iḷaṅgō mentions the kings of Pāṇḍya, Chōḷa, Chēra, Koṅgu and Ceylon who dedicated temples in honour of the Goddess Pattini. The order in which these kings have been enumerated seems to possess some significance for it closely resembles that followed by Aśōka in his edicts. In the edicts the order adopted is Pāṇḍya, Chōḷa, Śatīyaputra, Kēraḷaputra and Tāmraparṇi. The Kēraḷaputra is identified with Chēra and Tāmraparṇi with Ceylon. What is left is the Śatīyaputra kingdom and it is difficult to identify it with any other than the Kōśanāḍu of *Śilappadikāram*. This was also known as the Tuḷu land. After *Tolkāppiyam* and before Aśōka the Tuḷu country must have become independent and it retained that status until 2nd century A. D. the date generally ascribed to the *Śilappadikāram*.

We are in favour of the identification of the Śatīyaputra country with Koṅgu dēsa and treat its northern boundary as identical with the southern boundary of the Mauryan empire, the southern most limit of which may be placed along the North Veḷḷār As already seen, the Chōḷas may be placed only south of this region and the territory immediately north of the North Veḷḷār necessarily comes under Aśōka's rule as it falls within the orbit of his empire. In other words Aśōka's empire would include the whole of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam.[44] Pro. R. Sathianathier mentions in support of this view that the traditional northern limit of the Chōḷas was North Veḷḷār; that the Kāñchī region was a separate entity in Aśōka's time as evidenced by the Sanskrit grammarian Patañjali who lived in the 2nd century B. C. and the author of the *Periplus* and Ptolemy,[45] that the existence of Jain settlements in this region was due to the fact that the monarchs like Bindusāra and Aśōka smust have

44. R. Sathianathier: *Studies in the Ancient History of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam*, p p. 5–6.
45. *Ibid* p.6–7

given them encouragement consequent on which the Jains must have preferred to carry on their activities undisturbed in a region included within the empire; and as a matter of fact the predominant position that the Jains were enjoying in those regions could be convincingly explained only in the light of these circumstances, that they were enjoying imperial patronage. It is again said in support of this view that had it not been for the fact that Toṇḍamaṇḍalam became a part and parcel of the empire of Aśōka, it would be difficult to account for the later ascendancy of Buddhism there. Again it is maintained that it may not be altogether impossible that owing to the commercial importance of its position as attested to by Pan Kou[46] Toṇḍamaṇḍalam attracted the notice of the Maurya emperor or a viceroy of the southern-most Maurya province.[46a] Lastly it is said that the inscriptions giving the genealogy of the Pallavas mention the name of Aśōka or Aśōkavarman after the mythical names *vide*, *Vayalūr Pillar Inscription* of Rajasimha-Brahma, Aṅgīrasa, Bṛihaspathi, Śamyu, Aśōka, Harigupta, Āryavarman etc.[47] and the mention of a historical name as distinct from a mythological name in that list strongly favours the argument that Aśōka must have had a sway over the Toṇḍamaṇḍalam region. Until the correctness of this view is conclusively proved by further research the theory that Toṇḍamaṇḍalam formed part of Aśōka's empire may be doubted. In the subsequent pages some of our conclusions have been based on the assumption that this theory is tenable.

A relevant question props up here; if Toṇḍamaṇḍalam formed part of Aśōka's empire who must have conquered it? That Aśōka might have annexed it is out of the question for, as far as recorded history goes we do not know of any other war except the Kaliṅga war that Aśōka fought in his

46. *Ibid* p.7

46.a. D.C. Sircar: *Journal of Indian History*, Vol.XIV.P.149

47. R. Sathianathier: *Studies in the Ancient History of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam*, P.9

eight hregnal year. Then it must have been the work of either Chandragupta or Bindusāra and the evidence in favour of the latter is very strong. Tāranātha, the Tibetan historian ascribes this conquest to Bindusāra and Chāṇakya who is said to have continued to serve him as Prime Minister. The strong League of Tamil States referred to in the Hathigumpha Inscription must have originated as a result of Bindusāra's invasion of the South and must have been serving as a bulwark against him. This account of Bindusāra's invasion of the South is in substantial agreement with the tradition recorded by Māmūlanār of the Saṅgam Age who gives a number of references to the 'Vambamōriyar' and their invasion of South India as far as the Podiyill hills.[48] In view of the fact that the Tamil kings also gave a stiff resistance to these northerners and stemmed the tide of invasion sucessfully we are justified in thinking that this anti-Mauryan league of 278 B.C. must have expelled the Mauryan army from the Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya countries and consequently proclaimed their independence during the reign of Aśōka.

But what about Toṇḍamaṇḍalam? If Toṇḍamaṇḍalam is to be reckoned as a southern province of Aśōka there need be absolutely no misgiving about Hiuen Tsang's account associating Aśōka and his son Mahinda with Toṇḍamaṇḍalam where they are said to have erected topes, and "in any case the acculturation of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam must have been the work of Aśōka and his missionaries rather than of Karikāla Chōḷa and his officers."[49] As already pointed out, the comparatively prosperous condition of Buddhism in Kāñchī alone as against other centres in South India is sufficient proof of the fact

48. Dr. S. K. Aiyaṅgār: *Beginnings of South Indian History*, pp. 87–90. Māmūlanar-*Aham*.251, 264, 281

49. R. Sathianāthier: *Studies in the Ancient History of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam*, p. 12

that apart from the local conditions conducive to the popularity and growth of that religion, the benefits accruing as a result of imperial rule must have contributed a great deal to the initial success and the subsequent prosperity of that religion in that region. It was only after the death of Aśōka that Kaliṅga and the Āndhradēsa asserted their independence and Toṇḍamaṇḍalam must have followed suit. Toṇḍamaṇḍalam had to wait till the 2nd century, A. D. to feel the civilising influence of the reign of Karikāla, who, at any rate, could not be considered as a pioneer in that direction.

Let us now pass on to the inscriptions of Aśōka and see what light they throw on this problem. Rock Edicts II and XIII are relevant for our purpose here. Rock Edict II says:[50] "Everywhere in the dominions of king Devanāmpriya, Priyadarsin and (of those who (are his) borderers, such as the Chōdas, the Pāṇḍyas, the Satiyaputa, the Kēḷalaputa, Tāmraparṇi, the Yona king named Antiyoga, and the other kings who are the neighbours of this Antiyoga–every where two (kinds of) medical men were established by king Devanāmpriya Priyadarsin (*viz.*) medical treatment for men and medical treatment for cattle.

(b) Wherever there were no herbs beneficial to men and beneficial to cattle, every where they were caused to be imported and to be planted.

(c) Likewise, wherever there were no roots and fruits, everywhere they were caused to be imported and to be planted.

(d) On the roads trees were planted and wells were caused to be dug for the use of cattle and men."

From this edict it will be seen that some of the means he adopted for the promotion of Dhamma were connected with the material comforts of not only man but also beast and that

50. *The Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. I, p. 28 (Hultzsch's Translation of Rock Edict II–Kaḷsi.)

his philanthropic activities were not merely confined to his dominions but also extended to even independent kingdoms outside his empire like the Chōḷas, Pāṇḍyas, the Śatīyaputra and the Kēraḷaputra. This is sufficient proof to show that the Tamil country had come under the influence of the Buddhist propaganda of Aśōka. What has the other edict, Rock Edict XIII got to say on this matter? Again here the Tamil countries previously mentioned do find a place but with the exception of two kingdoms of Śatīyaputra and Kēraḷaputra. It says[51]

"(a) When king Devanāmpiriya Priyadarsin had been anointed eight years (the country of) the Kaliṅgas was conquered by (him).

(b) One hundred and fifty thousand in number were the men who were deported thence, one hundred thousand in number were those who were slain there and many times as many those who died.

(c) After that, now that (the country of) the Kaliṇgyas has been taken, Devanāmpriya (is devoted) to a zealous study of morality, to the love of morality and to the instruction (of people) in morality.

(d) This is the repentance of Devanāmpriya on account of his conquest of (the country of) the Kaliṅgyas.

(e) For this is considered very painful and deplorable by Devanāmpriya that, while one is conquering an (unconquered), country, slaughter, death and deportation of people (are taking place) there.

(f) But the following is considered even more deplorable than this by Devanāmpriya.

(g) (To) the Brāhmaṇs or Sramaṇas, or other sects of householders, who are living there, (and) among whom the following are practised: obedience to those who receive

51. *The Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, Vol. I, p. 48 et seq. Hultzsch's Translation of Rock Edict XIII.-Kalsi.

high pay, obedience to mother and father, obedience to elders, proper courtesy to friends, acquaintances, companions and relatives, to slaves and servants (and) firm devotion to these then happen injury or slaughter or deoprtation of (their) beloved ones.

(h) Or, if there are then incurring misfortunes the friends acquaintances, companions and relatives of those woshe, affection (for the latter) is undiminished, although they are (themselves) well provided for, this (misfortune) as well becomes an injury to those (persons) themselves.

(i) This is shared by all men and is considered deplorable by Devanāmpriya.

(j) There is no country where these (two) classes *viz.* the Brāhmaṇas, and the Sramaṇas do not exist, except among the Yongas; and there is no (place) in any country where men are not indeed attached to some sect.

(k) Therefore even the hundredth part of the thousandth part of all those people, who were slain, who died and who were deported at that time when (the country of) the Kaliṅgyas was taken (would) now be considered very deplorable by Devanāmpriya.

(o) ......desires towards all things———self control, impartiality (and) kindness.

(p) But this———by Devanāmpriya, *viz.* the conquest by morality.

(q) And this (conquest) has been won repeatedly by Devanāmpriya both (here) and among all (his) borders, even as far as at (the distance of) six hundred *yojanas*, where the Yona king named Antiyoga (is ruling), and beyond this Antiyoga, (where) four kings (are ruling) (viz. the king) named Tulamaya, (the king) named Antekina, (the king) named Maka, (and the

king) named Aliyashudala, (and) likewise towards the south, (where) the Chōḷas and Pāṇḍyas (are ruling) as far as Tāmraparaṇi.

(r) Likewise here in the king's territory among the Yonas and Kāmbōjas, among the Nābhākas and Nābhāpanktis, among the Bhojas and Piṭinikyas, among the Āndhras and Palladas–everywhere (people) are conforming to Devanāmpriya's instruction in morality.

(s) Even those to whom the envoys of Devanāmpriya do not go, having heard of the duties of morality, the ordinances (and) the instruction in morality of Devanāmpriya, are conforming to morality and will conform to (it).

(t) This conquest, which has been won by this everywhere, causes the feeling of satisfaction.

(u) Firm becomes this satisfaction (viz.) the satisfaction at the conquest by morality.

(v) But this satisfaction is indeed of little (consequence).

(w) Devanāmpriya thinks that only the fruits in the other (world) are of great (value).

(x) And for the following purpose has this rescript on morality been written (viz.) in order that the sons (and) grandsons (who) may be (born) to me, should not think that a fresh conquest ought to be made; (that) if a conquest does please them, they should take pleasure in mercy and light punishments, and (that) they should regard the conquest by morality as the only (true) conquest.

(y) This (conquest bears fruit) in this world (and) in the other world.

(z) And let all (their pleasure be the pleasure in exertion).

(aa) For this (bears fruit), in this world, (and) in the other world."

we have seen that the Mauryan expansion stopped short north of the Chōḷa country and the kingdoms mentioned here are no doubt beyond the direct political influence of the great Buddhist Emperor. But this does not imply that his religious propaganda stopped short of that limit and his edicts speak of the independent Tamil kingdoms as being under the influence of his propaganda and doctrines. This edict makes express mention of the many independent and quasi-independent states both on the borders of his empire and beyond in which the missionaries deputed by him achieved success in their work. There is room for the argument that because there is no mention about Kēraḷa in this edict, Buddhism did not prevail there. But we should carefully examine the edict when it refers to the southern kingdoms; it says: "below the Chōdas, Pāṇḍyas *as for as* Tāmraparṇi". The phrase *as far as* is the operative part of the sentence[52] and very significant for our study. Dr. Smith's interpretation [53] is very misleading and if we accept his translation of the passage we have to admit that Kēraḷa is not mentioned there for his reading would be: "Kings of the Chōḷas and Pāṇḍyas and of Ceylon" instead of "the Chōḷas and Pāṇḍyas as far as Tāmraparṇi" whereas Hultzsch[54] and Bhandarkar[55] refer to the South Indian kingdoms as far Tāmraparaṇi. This can be legitimately interpreted to include the Kēraḷa kingdom also. Even otherwise this omission may be taken as merely casual for Kēraḷa is already mentioned in Rock Edict II along with other Tamil kingdoms as a place where Aśōka did Buddhist propaganda and it would be

52. Dr. P. C. Alexander: *Buddhism in Kēraḷa*, p.25

53. Dr. V. A. Smith: *Aśōka*, pp. 131-32.

54. Hultzsch: *Inscriptions of Aśōka*, p.48

55. R. G. Bhandarkar: *Aśōka*, p.302.

arbitrary to assume that Kērala was chosen merely for philanthropic activities of the Emperor whereas the neighbouring countries were chosen for the introduction of Buddhism.

There are adequate grounds to say that Buddhism was introduced into the Tamil country through the missionary activity of Aśōka. Assuming that Toṇḍamaṇḍalam formed part of Aśōka's empire, there is no doubt that that region must have been brought under the scheme of spiritual conquest and in the light of the evidence given by the two Rock Edicts quoted above it would not be unfair to presume that the whole of the Tamil country became acquainted with that religion during his time.

The history of the origin of Buddhism in the Tamil country is so intermingled with that of Ceylon that a student of South Indian Buddhism would find it convenient to examine a connected account which would help in a better apprisal of the position. There is a widespread tradition in Ceylon, the fundamental tradition of the whole ecclesiastical history that king Dēvanāmpiya Tissa was a contemporary of Aśōka, that Buddhism was first introduced into Ceylon during his reign through the preachings of Mahinda. We may of course criticise the details of the narrative but to contest that fact itself would not be criticism but storile scepticism. The missionary work of Aśōka as it is described in the *Mahāvamśa* has received a striking corroboration in inscriptions of relic urns discovered in Sāñchi and similarly the name of Mahinda as the missionary sent to Ceylon is confirmed by Hiuen Tsang who however calls him not a son but a brother of Aśōka.[56] The Ceylonese tradition when dealing with the Third Buddhist Council held at Pāṭaliputra

56. According to Sinhalese sources and according to Hiuen Tsang, Mahinda was Aśōka's brother. In favour of this it may be said that the younger brothers of kings often became monks in order to avoid political complications. Sir Charles Elliot: *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. III, p. 15, footnote.

under the auspices of Aśōka in his seventeenth regnal year speaks of the propagation of Buddhism in different countries including Ceylon and these places are all now found to be indicated by the find spots of the Kalsi, Mansehrā, Shāhbāzgarhi, Girnar and Soprā versions of his Rock Edicts. The list of places given in the account (see above page 3) would suggest that apart from the legends being in general agreement with the inscriptions, as regards the countries that came within the purview of Aśōka's missions there was an important extension of the operations of these missions to some new regions not mentioned in the inscriptions, as a result of the enthusiasm for the faith roused by the Third Buddhist Council. Sinhalese tradition represents this decision to despatch missionaries to foreign countries as emanating from Moggaliputta Tissa whereas the inscriptions of Aśōka imply that the king himself initiated the mementous project. We cannot now tell to whom the great idea first occurred but it must have been carried out by the clergy. That Aśōka showed the greatest solicitude for the spiritual welfare of Ceylon is borne out by his close alliarce with Tissa and mutual exchange of missions with him. There is on record[57] the despatch of a mission by Aśōka to Tissa with coronation presents and happy wishes on his second consecration asking together with the personal message disclosing to him the fact of his embracing Buddhism and exhorting him also to do the same. Similarly the account of Vijaya's landing in Ceylon and the establishment of a historical dynasty, of Pāṇḍuvāsudēva's succession to the throne after Vijaya, of Pāṇḍukhabaya's building activities and above all of

57. B.M. Barua: *Aśōka and his Inscriptions*, p. 326. That this mission was not a Buddhist mission for the conversion of that island is evident from the purpose with which those missions were sent. At best it must have prepared the ground for the later conversion.

the friendly contacts of Tissa with Aśōka have all a value of their own when taken together and point to the conclusion that there was constant intercourse between India and Ceylon even prior to Aśōka thereby influencing the socio-religious ideas of the islanders so as to make them afterwards amenable to the teachings of Aśōka.[58]

These and similar contacts mentioned in Rock Edict II and Rock Edict XIII may be deemed to be the precursors of the Buddhist mission led by Mahēndra. In these two edicts Ceylon is mentioned as Tāmraparṇi[59] and as already included by Aśōka

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58. Sir Charles Elliot: *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. III, pp. 13-14.

59. Regarding the contention whether Ceylon is mentioned in the inscriptions controversy centres round the name of Tāmbapaṇṇi occurring in Rock Edicts II and XIII. Smith contends that the expression refers to the river Tāmraparṇi in the Tinnevelly district and not Ceylon. The word no doubt may mean the Tinnevelly district but it is a modern identification (*Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1908, pp. 215-16) and we are not sure if that was the name of the river in the Aśōkan age. For a proper identification we must know that country in the days of Aśōka was called by that name. The chronicles of Ceylon call the port of landing and the city near it as Tāmbapaṇṇi eversince the days of the Buddha (*Dīpavaṃśa* IX, 31). It was called by the same name in the days of Aśōka and Mahēndra. The name therefore was that of the port and city originally but afterwards embraced the whole land. Foreign writers also speak of Ceylon under the name of Taprobane. Ptolemy of the 1st century A. D. and the author of the *Periplus* use the same name to denote Ceylon. This post-Aśōkan evidence is corroborated by a contemporary account, that of Megasthenes, who says "Taprobane is separated from the main land by a river, that the inhabitants are called Palaiegonoi and that their

in the list of countries to which he despatched his dūtas to prosecute his scheme of Dhammavijaya. Thus by the time of the edicts i.e., 258–57 B. C. Ceylon was already a sphere of Aśōka's missionary activities which according to *Rock Edict II* included welfare work and positive social service. As the date of Mahēndra's work in Ceylon was much later i. e 252–251 B. C. a refeience to it was not possible in Aśōka's edicts, which however tell of his relations with Ceylon that must have prepared the ground for Mahēndra's work. The person who is expressly credited in the *Mahāvaṁśa* with having introduced Buddhism in Ceylon is Tissa at whose request his maternal uncle Mahā Ariṭṭa, the greatest statesman of the day went on a mission to the court of the Maurya Emperor to fetch a Bodhi tree along with Mahinda and Saṅgamitrā.

Thus ending the narrative of Ceylonese Buddhism with the conclusion that it was chiefly the work of Aśōka through Mahēndra and Tissa, we shall examine how far these missionary activities affected the Tamil country proper. There is a considerable number of scholars who think that Buddhism must have been introduced into Ceylon directly from Maghada and that the Tamil country had very little to impose in matters of religion upon the neighbouring island. That there are traditions pointing to the conclusion that Aśōkan missions were not as successful in the Tamil country as in Ceylon and that Ceylon influenced to some extent, rather than being influenced by the religion of the main land[60] should not alone lead us into the belief that the Tamil country had to expect the spiritual message from Ceylon. On the strength of the account given in the chronicles relating to Mahēndra's miraculous flight in the

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country is more productive of gold and large pearls than India" (M' Crindle's *Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian*, p.62). It is therefore reasonable to hold that Tāmbapaṇṇi referred to in the edicts stands for Ceylon.

60. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1928, p.667.

air to reach Ceylon, one may be led to think that Ceylon directly came to know of the teachings of the Buddha. Similarly the omission of any Tamil country in those chronicles when they speak of foreign missions may also incline one to think that Aśōka completely neglected the Tamil countries. The island monks were eager to establish the derivation of their religion direct from Maghada through the agency of Mahinda and his sister and had no desire to recall the bygone days of friendly intercourse with the Tamils. But it would be unfair to subscribe to Oldenberg's observation that "the story of Mahinda and his sister seems to have been invented for the purpose of possessing a history of the Buddhist institutions in the island and to connect it with the most distinguished person conceivable – the great Aśōka"[61] However exaggerated the account may be, there is no doubt that there is a substratum of truth in what the chronicles say about Ceylon and its conversion. There are strong grounds to believe that Buddhism must have been introduced first into the Tamil country by Aśōkan missionaries on their way to Ceylon. Smith says. "The naturalisation in Ceylon of the immense mass of Buddhist literature now existing in Pāli and, I believe, also in Sinhalese, must necessarily have been a work of time and would seem to be the fruit of long and continuous intercourse between Ceylon and the adjacent parts of India rather than the sudden result of direct communication with Maghada. The statements of the Chinese pilgrims in the 5th and 7th centuries prove that Aśōka's efforts to propagate Buddhism in the far south were not in vain and that monastic institutions existed in the Tamil countries which were in a position to influence the faith of the island."[61a]. According to a tradition recorded by Hiuen Tsang a Buddhist mission under Mahēndra was directed first to the country of Malayakūṭa below Drāviḍa i.e, the Tāmraparṇi country from

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61. Oldenberg in his *Introduction to Vinayapiṭaka*
61.a. V.A Smith: *Aśōka*, pp.48–49.

where he must have gone across to Simhala. This seems all the more probable and natural too, for the account that Mahinda "flew with his companions through the air like the king of swans flying in the sky" as described by the chronicles is devoid of any realism and tainted by imagination and exaggeration. Moreover it is possible that South India played a greater part in the conversion of Ceylon to Buddhism than the accepted legend indicates for the account of Hiuen Tsang speaks of a monastery built by Mahinda some where near Tanjore.[62] Smith also refers to the same monastery when he says: "Mahēndra after his conversion journeyed to the south of India and built a monastery in the delta of the Kāvērī (Cauvery) of which the ruins were still visible nine hundred years later."[63] It would be profitable to study here what Hiuen Tsang has to say on this point. Referring to Malakūṭa to the south of the Cauvery he says: "Some follow the true doctrine, others are given to heresy. They do not esteem learning much, but are wholly given to commercial gain. There are the ruins of many old convents, but only the walls are preserved and there are few religious followers. There are many hundred Dēva (Brahmanical) temples and a multitude of heretics mostly belonging to the Nirgranthas (Jains)."

"Not far to the east of this city is an old Saṅghārāma (monastery) of which the vestibule and court are covered with wild shrubs ...... This was built by Mahēndra, the younger brother of Aśōka Rāja. To the east of this is a stūpa, the lofty walls of which are buried in the earth ...... This was built by Aśōka Rāja."[64]

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62. Charles Elliot, *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. III, p.5 also Watters –*Yuan Chwang*, Vol. II, p.228
63. V. A. Smith: *Aśōka*, p.259
64. Beal: *Records of the Western World*, Vol. II, p.231

These interesting passages show how Aśōka and Mahēndra are associated with those places and how their traditions continued to be in the south even after nine centuries. Mahēndra is associated with a monastery to the south of the Kāvēri within easy reach of Ceylon and this goes a long waī to support the hypothesis that Mahēndra really passed over to the island from a southern port on the mainland. This is much more probable than the Ceylonese story that he came flying through the air. That this port may be Negapatām or a place some where near it may be gleaned from later traditions. Dhammapāla, the second great Pāli commentator refers to a monastery at Negapatām in South India which was known as Dharmāśōka Mahārāja Vihāra. This was evidently a much later Buddhist foundation named after Aśōka.[65].

Still later, the small Leiden grant of Kulōttuṅga I mentions Rājēndraperumpaḷḷi at Negapatām and some Buddhist temples which must have gathered a Buddhist population round them. Negapatām as a Buddhist centre was much older. According to Śambandhar Nāgai had Buddhists and Jains in the 7th century. The tradition connected with Negapatām is the Mehēndra embarked to Ceylon from Negapatām and from loṅg before Aśōka it kept up relations with the Nāga islands in the ocean.[66] As Sir Charles Elliot remarks it is possible that this

65. B. M. Barua: *Aśōka and his Inscriptions*, p. 352, footnote

66. K. R. Subramanyam: *Journal of the Madras University* Vol. I, p.30

Further information is available from the Talaing chronicles of Burma suggesting the interesting hypothesis that the Buddism of Burma was introduced or refreshed by missionaries from South India (Elliot: *Hinduism and Buddism*, Vol. III, pp. 44–45). On Palaeographic grounds also Buddism is said to have been introduced in Lower Burma from South India (*New Indian Antiquary*, Vol. II. p. 695)

apostle and others laboured less in Ceylon and more in South India than is generally supposed. But not withstanding the mythology that has gathered round his name Mahēndra was a real historical personage and there can be no doubt that he was a pioneer in the diffusion of Buddhism in Ceylon. The concurrence of Indian and Ceylon traditions about him and the existence of monuments in his name both in the island and in the mainland do not permit of scepticism as to his reality.

From the foregoing account it would not be too much to presume that Mahēndra and other missionaries embarked from some port in South India and thus before introducing it in Ceylon they must have also laboured to spread it in the Tamil country, for which presumption there are adequate grounds as mentioned above. Moreover it is not surprising that Aśōka should have sent his missionaries to Toṇḍamaṇḍalam even prior to Ceylon bearing in mind our assumption that that region was included in his empire.

The possibility of the spread of Buddhism in the Tamil country by Ceylonese monks cannot be altogether dismissed and archaeological evidence is available in support of this view. Some monuments in the Pāṇḍya country with inscriptions have been brought to light and they are assignable to the latter half of the 3rd century B.C. or the former half of the second century. But what we would infer from these inscriptions is that Ceylonese missionaries must have come to the Tamil countries only after the commencement by Aśōka of the Buddhist propaganda in the south. "These monuments are the oldest that the Pāṇḍya country contains or for the matter of that, the oldest in South India."[67] The mountain caverns known as the

67. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XL, 1911, pp.210–11: also *Proceedings of the Oriental Conference*, Third Session, 1924, p. 275.

Pañchapāṇḍavamalai containing stone beds with Brāhmī inscriptions incised on them form the earliest of the monuments in the Tamil country. Some of these are located in almost inaccessible heights of mountain slopes, others are found in out of the way places least frequented by men of the neighbourhood and still others are situated far into the interior of woods. Most of these are distributed round about the Madura and Tinnevelly districts. Experts in ancient architecture believe that the Buddhists were the first to make use of permanent materials for building and sculptural purposes and the followers of other Indian creeds subsequently copied them. The idea of using natural caves for religious purposes must have been started by the Buddhists whose creed makes it binding on the monks to resort to such out of the way places[68] and as Mahēndra observed it was not fitting for them being too near the city.

We shall take some of the caverns for a detailed study. The *Marugāltalai* (Tinnevelly district) cavern was discovered in 1906. This cavern is formed by two huge boulders, one overhanging the other on with it rests. Seven beds are cut on the bottom rock each of which must have been meant for one man either to lean or lie down. The same year five caverns with Brāhmī Inscriptions one on the *Ānaimalai* hill and four in the range of hills known as *Kaḻugumala* were also discovered. The Ānaimalai cave is almost inaccessible and it is naturally soformed as to afford shelter from rain and sun. In the interior there are three double beds and one single bed. Outside the cavern exposed to sun and rain are eight beds, all of which are chiselled smooth and provided with raised portions on one side meant to serve as pillows. Above the entrance is a well-preserved inscription in Brāhmī character. A little distance from the cave is a fine perennial spring of water, a common feature near most

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68. *Government of Madras Epigraphy Report* for 1907, Part II, p.46

of the caverns. Of the four caverns discovered in the Kaḻugumalai range three contain smoothly chiselled beds. In some the beds are numerous. All the four contain Brāhmī inscriptions and regarding these inscriptions, Mr. Veṅkayya remarks: "If the inscriptions and beds are synchronous we have in them the earliest lithic records of the Tamil country and the most ancient lithic monuments of the Tamil race. The fact that the language employed in them is Pāli may be taken to show that it was understood in the Pāṇḍya country even at that early period."[69] On the analogy of similar monument selsewhere Veṅkayya believed these to be Buddhist. In 1907 were brought to light three more caverns at *Varicciyūr* (Madura District) where the cavern is formed by the projection of two sides of a huge rock; on the bottom rock are cut numerous beds, the inscription in Brāhmī being found on the overhanging boulder; the second at *Mēṭṭupaṭṭi or siddharmalai* (Madura District) where the cavern is most picturesquely situated on the top of a hill. The beds are five and the inscriptions are engraved on the pillow portions of the beds themselves, establishing beyond doubt the synchronism of the beds and the formation of the cave; and the third at *Vīraśikhamaṇi* (Tinnevelly District) where the cavern contains a row of five damaged beds and in front of it are a number of holes bored in the rock meant probably for the insertion of poles or wooden pillars necessary for putting up temporary structures to keep off sun and rain. There are no inscriptions in this cavern.

In 1908 were found some more caverns in the Madura district at *Tirupparaṅguṉṟam* with six beds and Brāhmī inscriptions on the pillow side of the beds; at Aḻagarmalai with a number of beds and one line inscription and a spring

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69. *Proceedings of the Oriental Conference*, Third Session, 1924, p. 276.

of cool water. The existence of a rock-cut well in it is a peculiarity. There are also similar beds and inscriptions at *Uṇḍāṅkal.*

Though such caves are resorted to by Brāhmins, Buddhists and Jains and though Tamil literature does not provide us any positive evidence as to their origin or use there are strong circumstantial evidences to show that they were abodes of Buddhist monks. These monuments are popularly known as Pañchapāṇḍavamalai and the unsophisticated folk associate them with the Pañchapāṇḍavas and call the beds "Pañchapāṇḍavar Paḍukkai." But rather it reminds us of the Pāṇḍavapabbata at whose foot the Buddha after his renunciation took his first meal which he had obtained by begging and this fact suggest that these caves might have been the favourite resorts of Bauddha bikshus who probably had their meals in them as the name "Uṇḍāṅkal", "the rock of one who took meals" applied to one of them indicates. These monuments must have been named Pāṇḍavamalai after the name of the monument where the Buddha first resided. It would be also interesting in this connection to note that some of these hills are termed Kaḻugumalai, a Tamil rendering of the Sanskrit 'Gridhrakūṭa' the hill occupied by the Buddha during his ascetic life.

"The general formation of these caverns, the smoothly chiselled beds with a raised portion for the head big holes intended for fixing up poles and railings, number of small holes for works of protection – in all these details the caverns of the Pāṇḍya country resemble each other and agree in the main with the numerous monuments found in Ceylon which are assuredly Buddhistic."[70] The close resemblance which the Monuments bear to the earliest monuments of Ceylon goes to

70. *Ibid.* p. 279

prove the fact that they must have all come into existence at the same time shaped by the same hands and for the same purpose.[71]

Now let us proceed to examine some of the inscriptions found in the caverns. The character employed in these inscriptions indicates that they must be ascribed to the 3rd century or the 2nd century B. C. and in many respects it resembles that of Ceylon cave records of the same period. There is also literary evidence to substantiate this view. The *Mahāvamśa* states that after the conversion of Ceylon Mahinda and other monks spread the doctrine in foreign countries and in all probability the neighbouring Pāṇḍya country could have been first visited by the Ceylonese missionaries. Similarly in some of the inscriptions we come across the expression' īḻa' (ஈழ) meaning pertaining to Ceylon,[72] Among the places with caverns and Brāhmī inscriptions *Ariṭṭapaṭṭi* is also one which reminds us of the Sinhalese apostle Ariṭṭa of the 3rd century B. C.[73] All these go to prove the influence of Ceylonese missionaries in the Tamil country.

we shall now attempt to examine the contents of one or two Inscriptions. The *Marugāltulai* Inscription reads as follows:[74] Ve*na* Kosipa*na* Kutupita Kala Ka*na* Cana*ma*. In this, the first *na*, the second *na*, the third *na* and the *ma* at the end are treated as basic consonants and the reading is as follows: *Vēn Kōsipāu Kutupita Kāḷā Kāñcaṇam.*

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71. *Ibid.* p. 300
72. *Proceedings of the Third Orienal Conference,* 1924, p.p 289-92
73. *Indian Antiquary,* Vol, XL, p.211
74. *Proceedings of the Third Oriental Conference,* 1924 Mr. K.V. Subramaṇia Iyer's interpretation pp.287-88

The *Vēn* in the inscription may be taken to represent a territorial division or it may also stand for 'vēḷ' or a chief of which there were many in the Tamil country in the Sangam age.

Kōsipān may be taken as the proper name of a person equivalent in Pāli to Kassapa and Kāśipan in Tamil.

Kuṭupita is the verb, the full form of which must be kuṭupitān the modern equivalent being 'Koṭṭuvittān' meaning caused to be cut.

Kāḷākāñcaṇam is important. It may be taken as a compound of two words Kāḷā and Kāñcaṇam. Kāḷā may be taken as the alternate form of 'Kalya' meaning 'auspicious' or may be connected with the Tamil word 'kal' meaning a hill or a stone. The second word kāñcaṇam generally means 'gold' but its use here is peculiar; coming after the verb koṭṭuvittān it must have reference to the monument itself and can mean only 'an abode', monastery or temple.' Thus the inscription purports to convey that "*this auspicious (or stone) monastery was caused to be cut by Kāśyapa of the Vēṇ country*" (*or may mean* "*by the Vēḷir chief Kāśyapa*"

Similarly the *Uṇḍāṅkal* cave contains the following inscription: *Antai Pikān Makan Vēṇ tāna*. Antai here is used in the sense of a 'bed' (derived from a Sinhalese word.) What makes this interpretation all the more likely is that these inscriptions are found on the beds themselves.

Pikān is the name of a person
Makan is son
Vēṇ is again a proper name

tāna is another form of 'dāna' meaning 'gift'. So the inscription would read: "*This bed is the gift of Vēṇ the son of Pikan*".[75]

75. *Proceedings of the Third Oriental Conference,* 1924, K. V. Subramaṇya Iyer's Interpretation p. 299

Similarly the Siddharmalai Inscription contains the following: They are very short.

Pōtinūra-a-tāna = "The gift of one belonging to Pōdinūr",

Tiṭayil-a-tāna = "The gift of one belonging to Tiṭṭai".

Matirai antai = "This is the bed of one belonging to Madirai". The names of these places referred to as those of donors or architects convey to us the impression that throughout the Tamil country there were a few Buddhists then, though there were more in the Pāṇḍya country due to its proximity to Ceylon.

The above are the interpretations of K. V. Subramanya Iyer. But a different interpretation is given by Mr. C. Nārāyaṇa Rao.[76] Let us take the first, the Marugaltalai Inscription, the latter's interpretation is as follows:[77]

Vēṇa = Vaisyanam

Kōśipāna = Kāśyapanam.

Kuṭupita = Caused to be cut

Kāḷā kāñcaṇam = a particular type of building.

Thus it would read: "*The building caused to be cut for (or by or belonging to) the people, the Kāśyapas*",

or

if the 'Ko' in the word Kōśipana is to be read as 'ki' as Mr. Krishṇa Śāstri suggests[78] the inscription may be interpreted in an entirely different way. It needs to be reconstructed thus:

Vēnāki sipana kuṭupita kāḷā kāñcaṇam

Vēnāki: Vaināyaki i. e. a woman follower of the Vinaya or the Buddhist doctrine

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76. *New Indian Antiquary*, Vol. I p. 365

77. *New Indian Antiquary*, Vol. I. p. 365

78. *Proceedings of the Oriental Conference*, 1919, Vol. 2, p. 327.

Sıpana: silpanam i. e. belonging to the sect of silpins or architects.

Kuṭupita: caused to be cut

Kāḷā kāñcaṇam: building or monastery.

Then the reading would be:

"The building caused to be cut or built by a woman follower of the Buddhist Vinaya doctrine or a woman whose personal name was Vēnāki or Vaināyaki". And Mr. Nārāyaṇa Rao thinks this latter interpretation to be more appropriate.

Similarly Mr. Nārāyaṇa Rao reads the Uṇḍāṅkal Inscription thus: "another gift for the bhikkus, the gift of the great householder, the Merchants."[79]

There is a considerable difference in the interpretation of these two groups of scholars, Mr. Ṣubramaṇya Iyer and Mr. Krishṇa Śāstri on the one hand and Mr. Nārāyaṇa Rao on the other, for their very basis of interpretation is different. Though there is substantial agreement as to the Buddhist character of the caves there is divergence of opinion regarding the script used. Mr. Krishṇa Śāstri, according to Mr. Rao, has given a wrong lead by identifying certain of the groups of letters as Tamil words and Mr. Subramaṇya Iyer has made matters worse by acting on the wrong lead given by Mr. Śāstri. Mr. Rao charges him of undue and unwarranted liberty in their interpretation to make them appear as Tamil words. Dr. C. Nārāyaṇa Rao is of opinion that these inscriptions are Prākṛit records on the ground that "they are in Brāhmī characters and all contemporary Brāhmī inscriptions contain Prākṛit records."[80] Repudiating Mr. Subramaṇya Iyer's theory that they are Tamil inscriptions he observes: "There is no warrant for

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79. *New Indian Antiquary*, Vol. I, p. 375.

80. Proceedings of the Oriental Conference, 9th Session, 1937, p. 864.

assigning such an early date as the 3rd century B. C. for any Tamil inscription.... All South Indian records before say, the 5th century B. C. are in the Prākṛits. There are of course some Sanskrit records too. But there are no dated records in any of the Dravidian languages before that date. The period before the 5th century B. C. is considered an age of darkness in Dravidian linguistic history. The only languages that held the field here during the so-called dark period were the Prākṛits."[81] He also thinks that the Prākṛit used in these inscriptions is a form described by Prākṛit grammarians as Paisācī.[82] Whatever may be the controversy regarding the language adopted in the inscriptions, scholars are unanimous in accepting that they are Buddhist monuments, the existence of which in this part of the country proves the enormous influence of the Ceylonese missionaries and these inscriptions and monuments are generally assigned by scholars to a period after Aśōka had commenced his missionary activities in the south, say 200 B. C. Though we could not affirm that in all cases they were the abodes of Buddhist monks to the exclusion of the other sects, the age of the inscription and the analogy of Ceylon, where such caverns with Brāhmī inscriptions are numerous, point clearly to Buddhism.[83]

In the period immediately following Aśōka we perceive Buddhism and Buddhism alone spreading far and wide in India and it was on account of the peaceful state brought about by

81. *Ibid.* p. 873.

82. *New Indian Antiquary,* Vol. I, p. 376. More recently it has been pointed out by another scholar that the language of these inscriptions is Tamil.—see I. Mahadevan's paper "The Brahmi I inscriptions" read in the International conference of Tamil studies" held at Kualalampur in April 1966.

83. *Mahābōdhi* Vol. 50 (1942) p. 159

Aśōka's rule that it was possible for Buddhism to reach all the parts of India.[84] This almost phenomenal success was, according to Bhandarkar, mainly due to the fact that "Aśōka had the whole machinery and finances of his Imperial Government to help him to push forward his Dhamma and when he hit upon the novel but effective method of requisitioning the whole hierarchy of officials as his proselytising agents, it is no wonder if he attained far more real, rapid and extensive results."[85] Moreover there is another reason for such a tremendous success of the Aśōkan missionaries in the Tamil Coutry. The disciplined life of the monk and the self-sacrifice shown by him may have appealed to the hardy Tamil warrior who, having grown world weary of the endless number of battees he was called upon to fight might have found a calm refuge in the seclusion of monasteries.[86]

The foregoing discussion has brought to light one important fact that Buddhism was prevalent in the Tamil country in the distant past even before the dawn of the Christian era, thanks mainly to the untiring efforts and missionary zeal of that Mauryan Emperor. The external evidence so far drawn from the literary sources of Ceylon and the inscriptions of Aśōka, has testified to this fact and it now behoves us to go in for some internal evidence of a corroborative nature and the most helpful way would be to make a deep study of the literature of the Tamil country during this period, and discover whether any traces of Buddhism are found in the various literary works.

Our only source of information for anything trustworthy of the land is the huge mass of Tamil literature that is fortunately left to us and called by the name "Saṅgam Literature" generally

84. N. Dutt: *Early Monastic Buddhism,* Vol. II. p. 242

85. D. R. Bhandarkar: *Buddhistic Studies* by B. C. Law, p. 62,,

86. Swami Vipulānanda: *Aṇṇāmalai University Journal,* 1938 p. 203

assignable to the first three centuries of the Christian era. This designation assumes the existence of a body or an Academy of scholars and tradition claims that such an Academy flourished for thousands of years with its seat in the capital of the Pāṇḍya country. It is only when this body as a whole signified its approval that any work could go forth into the world as a Śaṅgam work. Tradition speaks of three such Śaṅgams, of which the first two consisted of a large number of scholars and kings who took an active part in the work of these bodies. The extraordinary length of time assigned to each one of these Śaṅgams mars their historicity and the most convenient and convincing way would be to assume that they refer to three brilliant epochs in the active work of a single Academy which might have existed for a number of centuries and that the bulk of the works that have come down to us may be ascribed actually to the last epoch or the traditional third Śaṅgam as a whole.[87]

It is generally believed that the word Saṅgha became popularised by the Jaina and the Bauddha Saṅghas, which were religious associations consisting of the Bhikkus and Bhikunis. It may be said that the Tamil Śaṅgam is an imitation of the Bauddha Saṅgha and there is warrant for this assumption since we know that the Buddhists had entered South India and Ceylon during the early centuries of the Christian era to which date is assigned the Tamil Saṅgam. Hence the existence of an association of poets modelled on the Buddhist Śaṅgha for the promotion of Tamil literature can be easily explained as due to the influence of Buddhists who had by that time settled in South India and particularly in the Tamil country.

In oder to make a convenient study of the fortunes of Buddhism in the Tamil country we shall divide the Tamil literature into three distinct periods, *viz* (1) the epoch of the

87. Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar: *Some contributions of South India to Indian Culture*, p. 12

early Saṅgam literature represented by the *Tolkāppiyam* and the *Tirukkuṛaḷ* (2) the epoch of the later Saṅgam literature represented by the anthologies of the *Puṛanānūṛu,* the *Ahanānūṛu* and the twin epics, the *Śilappadikāram* and the *Manimēkhalai* and lastly, (3) the epoch of the Hindu religious revival as reprersented by the Śaiva Samayāchāryas and the Vaishṇava āchāryas.[88] Let us confine ourselves to the first epoch in this chapter, and deal with the other two in the subsequent chapters, as they are not relevant to the chronological limits fixed for this chapter.

We may fix the chronological limits of this epoch; this commences roughly from the 4th century B. C. and can be said to end with the commencement of the Christian era. And we shall now examine the two works, *Tolkāppiyam* and *Tirukkuṛaḷ* that fall within this period and see what light they throw on the history of Buddhism in the Tamil country. Taking *Tolkāppiyam it* is the oldest grammatical work extant and is generally assigned by scholars to the 4th century B. C. Besides Orthography, Etymology and Syntax, the usual subjects of treatment under a grammatical work, it gives us all about the manners, customs, social and political life etc. in short the sociology of the Tamils 2000 years ago. The *Tolkāppiyam* which is said to have received its imprimatur in the august Assembly of Pāṇḍian Mākīrti under the distinguished Presidentship of Athaṅkōṭṭachan is divided into three parts, *viz.* Eḻuttu, Sol and Poruḷ, each being subdivided into nine chapters. In the Eḻuttu adikāram or the chapter on letters we find no invocation to any god as we do in later parts; but the book starts with a short preface by a person generally believed to be the colleague of the author and there are no traces in the whole chapter to indicate what the author's beliefs in matters of religion were. So also in the Sol adikāram

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88. Prof. V.R.R. Dīkshitar: Articled entitled "Buddhism in Tamil literature" in '*Buddhistic Studies*' edited by B.C. Law, p.673

or the chapter on words we find very little or practically no reference to the religious ideas of the author's times. Thus the first two parts of the work, as they mainly deal with letters and words and their grammar and as there is no necessity for discussing philosophical or religious matters do not contain any direct reference to the religious conditions of the land. It is said that while grammars in other languages do not include for treatment 'Poruḷ' "the subjective and objective sides of life' it is a unique feature in this magnificient work. It is from this portion of the work that we are able to get at a glimpse of the social and religious conditions of the people of the age.

Nowhere in the work do we find any reference to the Buddha or Buddhist institutions, but the influence of Brāhminism is traceable. Though the four varṇas or castes, according to birth were unknown to the Tamils of this period, classifications on the basis of occupations did really exist. The *Sūtra*ms from 69 to 86 in the *Marapiyal* mention the four different categories that existed in society *viz.* the Veḷḷaḷas or agrieulturists. Vaisyas or traders, Araśars or rulers and Antaṇars or priestly Brahmins. The rulers and noblemen of Tamiḻagam invited these priestly Brahmins to perform *yāgas* for them. Gods of the Hindu Pantheon like Vishṇu, Varuṇa' Indra. Sun and Muruga were also worshipped by them [89] Land was divided into four regions *viz.* mullai (pastoral), kuṟiñji (hilly), marudam (agricultural) and neydal (littoral) and each had its presiding deity, inhabitants and occupations. The very fact that they worshipped these Gods and believed not only in the efficacy of these yāgas but also actually resorted to their costly performance reveals not a mere acquaintance with, but a considerable assimilation of the Āryan practices and customs. Towns completely followed Āryan religion, built temples for gods and celetrated festivals

89. *Tolkāppyiam*-Poruḷ adikāram (பொருளதிகாரம்)
Agattiṇai Iyal (அகத்திணை இயல்), Sūtra 5.

while in villages the bedrock of early Tamil worship was still retained by the simple and unsophisticated folk. Even here Āryan beliefs and notions had slowly entered and the genius of the early Tamils was such that they borrowed freely from their North Indian brethren while preserving their individuality.[90] Moreover the early Tamils had clear conception of; the five natural elements, *viz.* fire, air, earth, water and ether as forming in conjunction what is called the universe.[91] There is ample evidence in the work itself to prove that the Tamilians of this antique age had a clear conception of the Supreme God. Their trinity did not coincide with that of the Āryans. They had the mysterious terms Koḍinilai ("கொடி நிலை") Kandaḻi ("*கந்தழி*") and vaḷḷi ("*வள்ளி*"), the exact meaning of which is not known. But these terms are qualified by clauses like "those that are of excellence without any blemish" ("வடுநீங்கிய *சிறப்பின்*") "those forming the foremost" etc., to denote the Supreme Being. There is no direct mention of temples in the work but prayer to God and vows to God were regular features of Tamilian worship. Sūtram 76 of the Poruḷ adikāram purports to say that there were bloody sacrifies to please the Gods including Murugan and that mantras had a special significance on such occasions ("தொல்லுயிர் வழங்கிய அவிப்பலியாளும்") Though there is no direct mention of Heaven in any of the early works of Tamil, we can infer from their practices in life as explained in the various sub chapters of Poruḷ adikāram that they had a clear idea of Mōksha as the culmination of this worldly life. These coupled with such references in the work itself as

"நான்மறை முற்றிய ... ஆசான்" (*தொல். சிறப்புப்பாயிரம்*),

"மரபிற்கோடல் ...... அந்தணர் மறைத்தே" (பிறப்பியல்–20),

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90. *Educational Review,* January 1937, p.55

91. "நிலம்தீ நீர்வளி விசும் போடைந்தும்
கலந்த மயக்க முலகமா தலின்."

"ஐயர் யாத்தனர் கரணமென்ப" (கற்பியல்-4)
"நூலே அந்தணர்க்குரிய" (மரபியல்-70)
"மாயோன்" (அகத்திணை இயல்-8)

are sufficient to prove the wide prevalence of Brāhminism in the Tamil land and its impact is easily discernible in the customs and habits of the ancient Tamils.

But scholars are not wanting who attempt to characterise the work as a Jain one. It may with some plausibility be argued that the *Tolkāppiyam* reflects some Jaina ideas or that its author was a Jaina by faith but there is absolutely no warrant for considering the work as Buddhist, for as we have already seen, Buddism was not even known in this part during such an early date as has been assigned to this work. Dr. A. C. Burnell without assigning any reason holds that *Tolkāppiyar* must have been a Jain or a Buddhist and assigns him a very late period. He thinks that Tolkāppiyar must have belonged to the sect of the Digambara Jains[92] and he is sometimes said to have been even a Buddhist.[93]

It is argued that Tolkāppiyar might have been a Buddhist,[94] in that the *Vīraśoḻiyam*, a Buddhist work of the 12th century A.D. states that Agastya learnt his grammar from Avalōkita and wrote his famous treatise. Tolkāppiyar being the chief disciple of Agastya, according to tradition, must have been a follower of Buddhism as his master was. But this in itself does not seem to be a sound argument and there is no other evidence external or internal to corroborate it. But as we have already seen, there is no mention of Buddha or Buddhist institutions anywhere in the work and a detailed examination of

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92. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. I p.310; A. C. Burnell, *Elements of South Indian Palaeography* p. 3

93. A.C. Burnell: *On the Aindra School of Sanskrit Grammarians* p.56

94. *Dr.S.K. Iyengar Commemoration Volume*, p.274.

the work would only reveal that Brāhminism must have been the prevailing faith during that age. We are further led to reiterate this point in view of the fact that Buddhism as a religious faith had not then made its appearance in the Tamil country and that it was only after nearly one and a half centuries that Buddhism began to influence the Tamil country. It would be interesting to note that the *Kuṟaḷ* which was separated from the *Tolkāppiyam* by nearly two centuries was to a certain extent influenced by Buddhist doctrines and this was due to the fact that the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* was the production of an age when Buddhism had made considerable progress in the Tamil country and had attained that degree of prominence as to influence the life and literature of the Tamils. Therefore it is safe to conclude that Buddhism must have been introduced in the Tamil country during the period intervening the *Tolkāppiyam* and the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* as the former is free from any Buddhist influence and in the latter could be traced a thin veil of Buddhist influence. And this period is also synchronous with the reign of Aśōka, during which period, as we have seen earlier, Buddhism was introduced in the Tamil country through his missionaries.

Let us now proceed to examine the other work *viz.* the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* which has been generally assigned to the second century B. C. and see how far the influence of Buddhism is discernible in that work. The *Kuṟaḷ* far outweighs in value the whole of the Tamil literature and is one of the select number of great works which have entered into the very soul of a whole people. All the great religions of India Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Christianity have claimed Tiruvaḷḷuvar as belonging to their own sect. The likelihood is that he belonged to no particular sect but worked out from his own experience a synthesis of the best he could find in all of them. Of Tiruvaḷḷuvar it may be truly said that "he was not of an age but for all time". To the Tamils of India Tiruvaḷḷuvar is a name to conjure with and they hold his work in the highest esteem. *Kuṟaḷ* is allowed by unanimous consent to be the

greatest ethical code of South India. He is a king among poets and moralists. Dr. S. K. Iyengar observes that the *Tirukkuṟaḷ* is a "didactic work the purpose of which is to enforce the teachings of ethics common to all religions then obtaining in India" and says that it is eclectic in character.[95] But from a close and careful examination of the available evidence it seems probable that the two religions exerted some influence on his work, discernible as it is from the ethical maxims contained in his work, which approximate more closely to the ideals of Buddhism and Jainism than to those of any other faith.

Tradition tells us that Tiruvaḷḷuvar was a weaver living at Mylapore. A laudatory verse by a contemporary poet Nalkoor Veḷviyār, found in the collection called "*Garland of Tiruvaḷḷuvar*" (திருவள்ளுவ மாலை) sung in appreciation of his work by various poets, purports to say that Vaḷḷuvar was born in South Madura.[96] There he gives Māthānupaṅki as another name of Vaḷḷuvar and this has led some to argue that he must have been a Buddhist. It is argued that this name Māthānupaṅki is strikingly similar to such compound names borne by Buddhists (vide. Paṇḍiṭ Swāminātha Iyer's *Introduction to Maṇimēkhalai*) and it is held that Tiruvaḷḷuvar was no doubt a Dravidian by race and blood who probably became a convert to Buddhism or Jainism two of the religions of the times or was a descendant of such converts. Moreover the suffix 'paṅki' found in his name

95. Dr. S. K. Iyengar: *Some Contributions of South India to Indian Culture*, p. 122.

96. உப்பக்க நோக்கியு பகேசிதோள் மணந்தான்
உத்தர மாமதுரைக்கச்சென்ப – விப்பக்க
மாதானுபங்கி மறுவில் புலச் செந்தாப்
போதார் புனற் கூடற்கச்சு

is even now known to be attached to the names of Buddhist monks in Burma.[97] From a palm leaf manuscript which gives an account of the 49 Tamil poets of the last Saṅgam, and an account of the life of Vaḷḷuvar, his parents and his brothers and sisters we know that his father's name was Pēraḷimāmuni.[98] This name seems to be of a Buddhist monk and most probably he was an Antaṉan[99] not a Brāhmin but a Buddhist monk as these monks were also called Antaṉar. The very word has been given a general significance by Vaḷḷuvar,

> "அந்தண ரென்போர் அறவோர் மற்றெவ்வுயிர்க்குஞ்
> செந்தண்மை பூண்டொழு கலான்" (chap.3 verse 10)

Here the word 'antaṉar' has no particular reference to Brāhmins but covers all righteous men who live in a spirit of benevolence towards all creatures. If Vaḷḷuvar's father was a Buddhist monk the question would arise how a monk who would be expected to observe celibacy came to have a son. It is easily explained by the circumstance that the monkhood was probably assumed only later in life as Vaḷḷuvar himself is reputed to have done after his wife's death. But it would be difficult to admit that Tiruvaḷḷuvar was a Buddhist or Jain merely on these insufficient grounds. In addition to the evidence of the name, in the light of internal evidence from the *Kuṟaḷ* itself it is not unreasonable to regard that his teachings must have been moulded by the influence of the two religions. It is probable that Tiruvaḷḷuvar might have had ample opportunities to come into close contact with Jains and Buddhists and might have been

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97. Swami Vedachalam. *Gñānasāgaram*, April 14, 1934, p.70 footnote.

98. Rao Bahadur Raṅgāchāriar: *A Descriptive Catalogue of Tamil Manuscripts* Madras Government Publication, p.423.

99. T. Lakshmaṇa Piḷḷai: *Select Essays* - Christ and Tiruvaḷḷuvar.

impressed by their philosophy. For we know that during this period Hindus, Jains and Buddhists were all living and worshipping in perfect peace and harmony. Sectarian bitterness had not then arisen and the various sects lived happily together in a spirit of peaceful tolerance and mutual respect. Moreover Mylapore, the place where Vaḷḷuvar was said to be living was not very far off from Kāñchī, a reputed centre of Buddhism in the Tamil country from very early days. We shall now examine the internal evidences in favour of this opinion.

First of all, it is stated that as a prologue to his work Tiruvaḷḷuvar introduces four chapters on four subjects viz. In praise of the Lord (கடவுள் வாழ்த்து); (2) In praise of rain (வான் சிறப்பு); (3) The greatness of those who have renounced the world (நீத்தார் பெருமை) and (4) The glorification of righteousness (அறன் வலியுறுத்தல்) and that these four have got apt parallels in Jainism also viz. அருகசரணம் correspondine to the first, சித்த சரணம் to the second சாது சரணம் to the third and தர்ம சரணம் to the fourth. Moreover, almost all the terms used in the chapter "In praise of the Lord" to denote the Supreme One like the 'Ancient one' ("ஆதி பகவன்"), "one of perfect intelligence" ("வாலறிவன்") "He who walked on Flowers" ("மலர்மிசையேகினான்"), "He who is beyond preference and aversion" (வேண்டுதல் வேண்டாமையிலான்"),[100] "He who burned away the Desires of the Five senses" (பொறிவாயில் "ஐந்தவித்தான்") and "The Sage who is the Ocean of Righteousness" ("அறவாழி அந்தணன்") all these apply distinctively to the Buddha and to the Arhat of the Jains.[101] This view gains further strength by the fact that these very appellations have been used by other authors like Iḷaṅgō aḍigaḷ and Śāttanār specifically in respect of Buddha.

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100. This term denotes the Buddhist idea of Desirelessness of God. H.A. Popley: *The Saced Kuraḷ*, p.69.
101. V.V.S. Iyer; *The Kuṟaḷ*: Preface p.LV.

Prof.M. Śēshagiri Śāstriar in his *Report on a search for Sanskrit and Tamil manuscripts* for the year 1896-97 says: "other words of the same radical signification are also to be met with in Tamil literature as the title of Jina such as' 'பூமிசை நடந்தவாமன்' 'பூமிசை நடந்தான்', 'மலர்மிசை போகினான்'. Though such epithets refer to God Śiva also in later Tamil literature, yet in the ancient literature they refer to Jina and Buddha only." Again it is pointed out that there is remarkable similarity between what Tiruvaḷḷuvar has said on medicine in chapter 95 of his work and the Buddha's discourse on medicine to Baradhvāja.

Dividing the objects of life into three great classes viz. virtue wealth and love (Aham, Poruḷ, Inbam) and treating of these under their various subdivisions Tiruvaḷḷuvar epitomizes the world of ethical and practical wisdom, keeping clear of the quagmires and quicksands of metaphysical speculation. There is a fourth object viz. Mōksha (Vīḍu) which he has not included in his work. Various reasons are given for this omission and it is said that he is mainly concerned with practical things and with matters belonging to the everyday world and hence this omission. Probably he might have decided to leave it alone believing that if people would but follow his teachings in the first three books they would attain to Mōksha.

The Jain tradition identifies the author of the *Kuṟaḷ* with Kuṇḍakuṇḍa otherwise called Ēlāchārya who was a reputed Jain author of the south, but it is indeed very difficult to accept this identification. Another tradition identifies Ēlēlasiṅga, under whose patronage Tiruvaḷḷuvar is said to have composed the *Kuṟaḷ*, with Ēlāchārya, the great Jain āchārya, well versed in Sanskrit and Prākṛit, who carried on the work of propagating Jainism in the Tamil land in or about the 1st century A. D.[102] Again *Nīlakēsi*, a Jaina Kāvya of a later century wherever

102. V. R. R.Dīkshitar: '*Indian Culture*', Vol. VII. p. 41

reference is made to *Tirukkuṛaḷ* refers to it by saying "our Sacred Book" ("எம் மோத்து") which obviously means that *Kuṛaḷ* was taken to be a work breathing the Jaina philosophy and that the Jains generally believed that Vaḷḷuvar was a member of their community[103].

It would be profitable to note in this context Dr. Caldwell's ideas on this subject. He says: "The author of the *Kuṛaḷ* is claimed with equal reason by Śaivas, Vaishṇavas and Jains, On the whole the argument of the Jains appears to preponderate, especially that which appeals to the Jaina tone that pervades the ethical part of the work e. g. scrupulous abstinence from the destruction of life is frequently declared to be the chiefest excellence of the true ascetic. Nevertheless from the indistinctness and undeveloped character of the Jaina element which is contained in it, it seems probable that in Tiruvaḷḷuvar's age Jainism was an esoteric ethical school than an independent objective system or religion, and was only in the process of development out of the older Hinduism."[104]

Nothing is said in the work about the dignity of the Brāhmins who are not even mentioned by their exclusive official name. The word Antaṇar is not used with particular reference to Brāhmins but covers all righteous men who live in a spirit of benevolence towards all creatures. He cuts at the root of caste pride.

"அந்தணரென்போர் அறவோர் மற்றெவ் வுயிர்க்குஞ்
செந்தண்மை பூண்டொழு கலான்."[105] (Ch. 3:10)

103. M. S. Rāmaswāmy Iyeṅgar: '*Jaina Gazette*', July 1920.

104. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. VII, p.220

105. Here the word 'அறவோர்' is taken to refer to அறவுரை which is specifically applied to the teachings of the Buddhist monks, vide. the following verse of Gñāna-sambandar.

"கடுமலியுடலுடைய மணருங்
கஞ்சியுண் சாக்கியரு
மிடுமறவுரை தவிரயிகழ்பவர்
கருது நம் மீசர்வானேர்."

Again the author of the *Kuṟaḷ* does not subscribe to the view that birth alone decides a man's greatness and provides him a lofty place in society. On the other hand he says that real greatness of men is independent of birth and rests on purely moral grounds. He deprecates caste distinctions – distinctions based on birth – Birth in a particular group means nothing in itself and in birth all men are quite alike, but in worth they differ by their deeds. This idea is admirably conveyed in the following couplets:

> "பிறப்பொக்கும் எல்லா வுயிர்க்குஞ் சிறப்பொவ்வா
> செய்தொழில் வேற்றுமை யான்." (98:2)

Also read:

> "மறப்பினு மோத்துக் கொள்ளலாகும் பார்ப்பான்
> பிறப்பொழுக்கங் குன்றக் கெடும்." (14:4)

i. e. "Even the Vedas, if forgotten, can be learned again; but once fallen from virtuous conduct the Brāhmaṇ is fallen from his place for ever."

> "பெருமைக்கு மேனைச் சிறுமைக்குந் தத்தங்
> கருமமே கட்டளைக் கல்." (51:5)

i. e. "Dost thou want to find out whether a man is noble or little minded know that conduct is the touchstone of character."

In these verses he lays stress on 'right conduct' as the way to attain greatness and not birth. Similarly we may perceive in the work a wonderful manifestation of the doctrine of 'resist not evil by evil' so characteristic of these two religions. The following verses may be noted:

> "கறுத்தின்னா செய்தவக் கண்ணும் மறுத்தின்னா
> செய்யாமை மாசற்றார் கோள்." (32:2)

i. e. "Even when another hath injured him in his haste the man who is pure in heart returneth not the injury."

"அறிவினு ளெல்லாந் தலையென்ப தீய
செறுவார்க்குஞ் செய்யா விடல்" (21:3)

i. e. "Not to return evil even to those who offer it is the crown of all virtues."

"இன்னா செய்தார்க்கு மினியவே செய்யாக்கா
லென்ன பயத்ததோ சால்பு." (99:7)

i e. "If one cannot be good to those who do harm, of what use is one's worthiness?"

"இன்னா செய்தாரை யொறுத்தல் அவர்நாண
நன்னயஞ் செய்து விடல்." (32:4)

i. e. "How shall a man punish them that have injured him? Let him do them a good turn and make them ashamed in their hearts." (A truly Buddhist idea).

The emphasis that Tiruvaḷḷuvar places on love, forgiveness, gentleness and forbearance [106] is especially noteworthy. It is possible that this may be due to the teaching of the Buddha, which was well known in the Tamil country at that time, and the people of the south were peculiarly responsive to that gentle note. As H.A. Popley says, "It is not impossible that the influence of Buddhism together with his own meditations upon the problems of life under the inspiration of God's loving spirit, led him to the thoughts and ideals which he has worked out in these chapters."[107] A similar tone may also be perceived in Mr. Temple's remark when he says: "of the author nothing is really known except that he was a weaver and lived at Mylapore. From this village came one of the grandest productions of man's brain, much of which bears so strong a resemblance in thought to the Sermon on the Mount.......I would however deprecate too much stress being laid on this fact and I perhaps sufficiently indicate my reasons by drawing attention to

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106. See *Kuṟaḷ* verses 76, 128, 154, 155 and 156.

107. H.A. Popley: *Sacred Kuṟaḷ*, Introduction, p.24

the Buddhist Khuddaka-Patha, which so clearly reflects the same doctrines."[108]

The first part of the work on virtue concludes with four sections on impermanence of earthly things, renunciation, the realization of Truth and the eradication of desire. When man has fulfilled his duties towards society by living a life of usefulness and virtue, he has to think of another life, the life after death. The householder has ascended a few rungs on the ladder of life with the help of of his righteous conduct. But now for a glorious and equally worthy life after death he has to lead a life of stricter discipline than before. He has now to practise mercy to all living beings, abjure flesh, mortify his body and concentrate his thoughts and thus obtain a higher spiritual power and vision; purify his mind by a strict adherence to truth and conquer his anger. This life of discipline removes the veils of ignorance covering the soul, the eyes of the ascetic are opened and he sees that the phenomenal life is no better than a dream and a shadow, a thing that is today but passes away tomorrow. He therefore renounces his attachment to this world utterly and then he realises the truth. But there is yet the insidious foe of Desire which tempts men, even the most spiritually minded and until that is killed once and for all there is no permanent bliss for the soul. Thus the five chapters of *Kuṟaḷ,* viz., 34, 35, 36, 37 and 38 are the most significant from our point of view for they treat of essentially Buddhist doctrines like Impermanance, Renunciation, etc., Similarly chapters 24 to 33 also are important since they deal with an ascetic's life and its concomitants like abjuring of meat diet, non-injuring and non-killing so characteristic of Buddhism and Jainism. Though it would be hasty to jump to the conclusion that Tiruvaḷḷuvar was himself a Buddhist, the evidences so far given when taken together have got a significance of their own and clearly point to the probability that he came under the

108. R.C. Temple: *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XV. p. 242

influence of Buddhist teaching. It has been pointed that the extraordinary emphasis that he lays on renunciation and its efficacy as the only panacea for the ills of the world is truly due to the Buddhist influence. Even in his introductory verses Tiruvaḷḷuvar speaks in praise of those who have renounced the world[108a] thus giving to that subject a special significance and prominence and in a subsequent section treats of Renunciation, the concept as such separately. For instance, see how Tiruvaḷḷuvar exalts one who has renounced the world:

> "இருமை வகைதெரிந்து ஈண்டறம் பூண்டார்
> பெருமை பிறங்கிற் றுலகு."

i. e. "Behold the men who have weighed this life with the next and have renounced the world; the earth is made radiant by their greatness."

> "ஐந்தவித்தானாற்றல் அகல் விசும்புளார் கோமான்
> இந்திரனே சாலுங் கரி." (3:5)

i. e. "Dost thou desire to know the power of the saint who hath quenched the cravings of his five senses. Look on the king of the Gods - Indra his one example is enough."

Again emphasizing renunciation as the cure for all ills he says under the head 'Tuṟavu':

> "வேண்டி னுண்டாகத் துறக்க துறந்தபின்
> ஈண்டி யற்பால பல." (35:2)

i. e. "If thou want joy renounce early: for many are the delights that thou shalt enjoy after renouncing."

> "பற்றிவிடாஅ இடும்பைகள் பற்றினைப்
> பற்றி விடா அதவக்கு" (35.7)

i. e., "Behold the man who holdeth on to attachments and giveth not them up: care and sorrow will take hold of him and will not give him up."

108a. *Kuṟaḷ*, verses 21 to 30

"தலைப்பட்டார் தீரத்துறந்தார் மயங்கி
வலைப்பட்டார் மற்றையவர்." (35:8)

i. e. "They that have renounced utterly are on the path to salvation; but the others are caught in the snare".

"பற்றற்ற கண்ணே பிறப்பறுக்கும் மற்று
நிலையாமை காணப்படும்." (35:9)

i. e. "The moment that attachments are broken, that very moment reincarnations cease: the man who breaketh them not continueth in vanity".

He who observes non-killing and other virtues as a householder will be reborn as a deva in the succeeding birth. This virtue will give him the Swarga bliss only but will not lead him to the final emancipation or beatitude. Even the birth as a celestial, as it again leads to birth, the domestic household life will be included in things evil. Hence it follows that renunciation is by far better than the household life. This idea is very well illustrated by two *Kuraḷ* verses.

"வையத்துள் வாழ்வாங்கு வாழ்பவன் வானுறையுந்
தெய்வத்துள் வைக்கப் படும்"

"யானென தென்னுஞ் செருக் கறுப்பான்,
வானோர்க்குயர்ந்த உலகம் புகும்"

The impermanence of material things is one of the deep seated convictions of the Buddha and we see it very well reflected in the following verses of the *Kuraḷ*:

"நில்லாதவற்றை நிலையின என்றுணரும்
புல்லறி வாண்மை கடை." (34:1)

i. e. "There is no greater folly than the infatuation that looketh upon the transient as if it were everlasting."

"நெருநலுள னொருவன் இன்றில்லை என்னும்
பெருமையு டைத்திவ் வுலகு" (34:6)

i. e. "But yesterday a man was and today he is not; that is the wonder of wonders in this world."

The Buddhist precept that "Avidya or Ignorance is the root cause of all evils" is very well illustrated by Vaḷḷuvar in the following verse:

"பொருளல்ல வற்றைப் பொருளென் றுணரும்
மருளானாம் மாணாப் பிறப்பு." (36:1)

Delusion is to take mere vanities for Reality. This is called avidya or ignorance and it is this ignorance that leads to birth. Knowledge of the Truth puts an end to all misery and birth.

"பிறப்பென்னும் பேதைமை நீங்கச் சிறப்பென்னுஞ்
செம்பொருள் காண்ப தறிவு." (36:8)

i. e. "He is the wise man who endeavoureth after perfection and Truth in order that he might escape the folly of being born again". It is therefore evident that to be born again is misery and avidya is the root cause for this and that once avidya is removed there is no more misery and no more birth.

H. A. Popley remarks[109] that the chapter on "The killing of Desire" (அவாவறுத்தல்)" suggests that the poet had a close acquaintance with the Buddhist lore". This chapter is saturated with the Buddhist philosophy.

" அவாவென்ப எல்லா வுயிர்க்கு மெஞ்ஞான்றும்
தவாஅப் பிறப்பீனும் வித்து". (37:1)

i.e. "Desire is the seed that yieldeth unto every soul and always a never-failing crop of births".

"அற்றவ ரென்பாரவா வற்றார் மற்றையார்
அற்றாக அற்ற திலர்" (37:5)

i.e. "It is those that have conquered their desire that are called the liberated ones: The others appear to be free but they are verily in bondage".

"அவாவினை யாற்ற அறுப்பிற்ற வாவினை
தான்வேண்டு மாற்றான் வரும்". (37:7)

109. H. A. Popley: *Sacred Kuṛaḷ*, p. 86

i.e. "If a man crusheth utterly all desire, salvation will come to him by any path that he commandeth to it".

"அவாவில்லார்க் கில்லாகும் துன்பம் அஃதுண்டேல்
தவாஅது மேன்மேல் வரும்" (37:8)

i.e. "He that hath no desires hath no grief: but ills on ills descend on the man that hankereth after things".

The Buddha's emphasis on self exertion is well reflected in the following verse:

"தெய்வத் தானாகா தெனினும் முயற்சிதன்
மெய்வருத்தக் கூலிதரும்." (62:9)

i.e. "Eventhough the Gods be against, industry is bound to pay the wages of labour". The idea is that eventhough the force of Karma is all working against you, persistent effort will overcome this opposition.

Then coming to another important point viz. the doctrine of *ahimsa*, we may say that Tiruvaḷḷuvar went a step further than the Buddha himself in developing that concept. Abstinence from meat eating is one of the duties enjoined upon the ascetic but Tiruvaḷḷuvar would apply this teaching to all men. According to the Vedas animal sacrifice forms the central theme; but here condemnation of the same in unequivocal terms and praising of non-killing as the primary dharma is to be noted:

"அறவினை யாதெனிற் கொல்லாமை கோறல்
பிறவினை யெல்லாந் தரும்" (33:1)

i.e. "The greatest of virtues is non-killing; killing bringeth in its train every other sin."

"நன்றாகு மாக்கம் பெரிதெனினுஞ் சான்றோர்க்குக்
கொன்றாகு மாக்கங் கடை" (33:8)

i.e. "They may say sacrifices gain for a man many blessings but to the pure in heart the blessings that are earned by killing are an abomination".

Tiruvaḷḷuvar does not admit of killing even for sacrificial purposes.

"அவிசொரிந் தாயிரம் வேட்டலின் ஒன்றன்
உயிர்செகுத் துண்ணாமை நன்று" (26:9)

i.e. "To abstain from the killing and eating of living beings is better than to perform a thousand sacrifices in the sacrifical fire".

He speaks in exaltation of one who has abjured meat die t and who has taken a vow not to kill living beings:

"கொல்லான் புலாலை மறுத்தானைக் கைகூப்பி
எல்லா உயிருந்தொழும்." (26:10)

i.e. "Behold the man who killeth not and abstaineth from flesh meat; all the world joineth hands to do him reverence." He again condemns eating of flesh:

"அருளல்ல தியாதெனிற் கொல்லாமை கோறல்
பொருளல்ல தவ்வூன் றினல்" (26:4)

i. e. "The killing of animals is veritable hardness of heart; bu t the eating of their flesh is inequity indeed".

It is in this respect that Tiruvaḷḷuvar has gone a step further than the Buddha himself. Vaḷḷuvar condemns the lip service to ahimśa which is characteristic of Buddhism. The Buddhist practises ahimsa in so far as he does not himself slaughter the animal. But he can purchase meat from the butcher without violating his principle. But Vaḷḷuvar pictures a fearful fate for the man who eats flesh even when others kill. The author of the *Kuṟaḷ* fixes the responsibility on the right shoulders. The butcher carries on his trade for the benefit of the meat-eater; it is a question of demand and supply. Hence the responsibility is on the side of demand which sustains the trade. Therefore there is no use in blaming the butcher; but all people should give up meat eating. This idea is contained in the following couplet.

"தினற்பொருட்டாற் கொல்லா துலகெனின் யாரும்
விலைப்பொருட்டா லூன்றருவாரில்." (26:6)

i. e. "If the world desireth not meat for eating there will be none to offer it for sale."

The emphasis that Tiruvaḷḷuvar lays on Renunciation and its meritoriousness may be attributed to Buddhist and Jain influence. At the time when Vaḷḷuvar wrote his *Kuṟaḷ* the number of wandering ascetics must have been very large in the Tamil country as by that time Buddhism had gathered a considerable amount of support and sympathy. The ascetics and the reverence they commanded from society must have impressed Vaḷḷuvar who thought it fit to devote an exclusive chapter in his work on their greatness. Moreover he broke to pieces the long-cherished tradition of the ancient Hindus that Brāhmins alone are competent to aspire for asceticism (vide a story in *Rāmāyaṇa* as stateed by Kulasēkara Āḻvār in Perumaḷ Tirumoḻi 10: 9)[110] and established the fact that any person, irrespective of caste, can become an ascetic if he succeeds in observing the code of morality and in undergoing the special discipline prescribed. Thus the emphasis on Renunciation as an important dharma in life and its accessibility to all men without any distinction whatsoever speak remarkably in favour of Vaḷḷuvar's leanings towards the teachings of the Buddha.

Again that the kings, chieftains and noblemen of Tamiḻagam were addicted to meat eating and drinking is evident from contemporary Tamil works[111] and Tiruvaḷḷuvar's point of view on these subjects as we have seen already will clearly manifest a thorough deviation from the accepted traditions of Tamiḻagam in those days. This may again be ascribed to the influence of Buddhist teachings which indulge in a scathing denunciation of

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110. R. Narasimhan: *Sen Tamiḻ*, Vol. 33, p. 213

111. *Puṟam*, 56 lines 18–21; *Puṟam*. 113 and 58.

such habits. Thus eventhough it would be difficult to arrive at a conclusion as to the author's personal religious faith, from the above account it is reasonable to think that the Buddhist doctrines had exerted a considerable influence on his work. Though it is generally admitted that the *Kuṛaḷ* breathes the spirit of universalism and that it is eclectic in character it is sufficiently clear that its author was favourably inclined towards Buddhism. It is also significant to note that during this period Tamiḻagam was familiar with the teachings of the Śākyamuni, thanks to Aśōka's missionaries who had introduced that religion in the Tamil country, a century earlier.

CHAPTER 2

Buddhism in the First Three Centuries of the Christian Era.

As the foregoing discussion has shown, though Buddhism was not a powerful factor influencing the life of the people of the Tamil country in the centuries preceding the Christian era, it is an undeniable fact that stray members of the sect were living here and there in the chief cities of the Tamil kingdom strenuously labouring to enlist the sympathy and support of the public. It is to be said to the credit of these enthusiastic Buddhists that they were successful in a large measure in achieving this end. A careful examination of the Tamil literature belonging to the early centuries of the Christian era would bear testimony to the improved fortunes of that religion. We have already alluded to the division of Tamil literature into three different periods to facilitate a convenient study of the course that the Buddhist religion took in the Tamil country of which the first period has been dealt with in the previous chapter. Now we are concerned with the Tamil works belonging to the second period which may carry us to about the middle of the third century of the Christian era or perhaps a little later. The evidence that we get from the available literary data enables us to prove that during the early centuries of the Christian era Buddhism had attained a great degree of popularity in the Tamil country and that the Buddhist sect had come to stay as a permanent institution in the form of organised saṅghas or associations in the different cities of Tamil Nad slowly but surely adding more and more adherents to that religion.

Purely historical works being completely absent, our only source is the large collection of Tamil classical works such as the *Puṟanānūṟu*, the *Pattuppāṭṭu* the *Padiṟṟuppattu*, etc. and the twin epics, the *Śilappadikāram* and the *Maṇimēkhalai* which may all be assigned to this period. Though from the point of view of chronology these poetical works are not much reliable as they do not throw any light upon the time when the kings and chieftains whom they have eulogised lived and reigned, they contain really trustworthy accounts about the early kings of South India and the manner in which the poets have written these works "seems to indicate that the writers cared more for presenting real facts than for a display of their imaginativeness, for, truly these interesting pieces of the ancient Tamils are completely void of all poetic embellishments which we find in the later days works."[1]

One author goes to the extent of even placing as much reliance on these works as he would do on the Travel notes of Fahien and Hiuen Tsang. But it would be improper to compare such a complex and complicated collection of literature, devoid of definite chronological evidence, the authors of which belonged to different periods with the Travel accounts of the Chinese pilgrims which contain abundant material furnishing us valuable chronological evidence.

We shall now proceed to examine what information is available from the classical Tamil works of this period regarding the position of Buddhism in the Tamil country. The classical works like the *Ahannāūṟu* the *Puṟanānūṟu* and the *Pattuppāṭṭu* do not contain any direct reference to the religion of the Buddha, but certain terms occuring in the poems lead us to believe that Buddhism had secured a firm place in the society of the Tamils and that it had begun to influence the activities and behaviour of

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1. K. V Subramaṇia Iyer: *Historical Sketches of Ancient Dekhan*, pp. 91-92.

the people. For instance, in an ode of the *Puṟam* anthology[2] some stray reference to the existence of Buddhist literature is found according to its commentator. The first part of the passage refers to the heroe's descent from a family of learned men who made it their life occupation to study the four Vedas. This great learning was attained by them in order that they may be enabled thereby to beat down all those outer religions which base themselves on works which set themselves against the Veda. Having acquired this learning they understood the false teachings of those religions which appeared like truths and exhibiting their false character established the truth of the Vedic religion by celebrating sacrifices in the twentyone orthodox ways. From this it would appear that at the time when Āvūr Mūlaṅkiḻār, the author of the ode was living there existed a body of heterodox literature speaking in condemnation of the Vedic rites It is to be remembered that eventhough Buddhism gained a firm ground in the Tamil country during this period it was not in a position to supersede or overpower the Vedic religion for it is evident from a large number of odes in the *Puṟam* collection that the Vedic religion continued to be flourishing and Vedic yāgas were continued to be performed by be people. From this and such other references in the Tamil literature of the period we can infer that the Brāhminism that prevailed in the Tamil country had for one of its specific objects an exhibition of the

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2. *Puṟanāṉūṟu* – Ode 166, lines 1–9.

"நன்றாய்ந்த நீணிமிர் சடை
முதுமுதல்வன் வாய் போகா
தொன்றுபுரிந்த ஈரிரண்டின்
ஆறுஉணர்ந்த ஒரு முதுநூல்
இகல் கண்டோர் மிகல் சாய்மார்
மெய்யன்ன பொய் உணர்ந்து
பொய்யோராது மெய் கொளீஇ
மூவேழ் துறையும் முட்டின்று போகிய
உரைசால் சிறப்பின் உரவோர் மருக"

heretical character of the sister religions, Buddhism and Jainism and that these religions existed side by side with Brāhminism, having attained to a certain amount of organisation for effective controversy.

We see references to Buddhism in the collection called *Pattuppāṭṭu*. In the *Perumbāṇāṟṟuppaḍai* there is a farfetched reference to Buddhism. In lines 409–11[3], in the course of his description of the city of Kāñchī the author Kaḍiyalūr Uruttiran Kaṇṇanār says that "that city is superior to others in its glory and in the fact that many men worship there and hold festivals in it." The reference in this passage to many men worshipping and holding festivals in Kāñchī is interpreted to mean that representatives of different faiths like the Vaishṇava, Śaiva, Jaina and Bauddha lived in that city as they did when Hiuen Tsang visited Kāñchī in the 7th century A. D.[4] Again in the *Pṭṭinappālai* by the same author there is a reference to Jaina and Bauddha monasteries. In the course of his description of Kāvirippūmpaṭṭinam, the author after describing the sea shore, the large number of boats laden with merchandise anchored near the shore, the beautiful groves, the twin lakes. the lovely ponds and the great feeding houses refers to the "monasteries for (Bauddha and Jaina) ascetics" in lines 51–63[5], the exact term occuring in the text being "tavappaḷḷi" which is generally

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3. "புலஞக் கடலுடுத்த வானஞ் சூடிய
மலர்த லையுலகத்துள்ளும் பலர் தொழ
விழவுமேம்பட்ட படிவிறன் மூதூர்".

(Perum. 409–11)

4. P. T. Sṟīnivāsa Iyengar: *History of the Tamils*, p. 394 Also see *Pattuppāṭṭu* commentary by Nacchinārkkiniyar, edited by Mahāmahopādhyāya V. Swāminātha Iyer, p. 251

5. "தண்கேணித் தகை முற்றத்துப்
பகட்டெருத்தின் பல்சாலைத்
தவப்பள்ளி தாழ்காவின்."

(Pat. 51–53)

associated with a Bauddha monastery. From this passage, it is evident that even in cities like Kāvirippūmpaṭṭinam Buddhism had attained a permanent status. This is the first time we hear in Tamil literature of settlements of Bauddhas and Jains in any city of the Tamil country other than Kāñchī. This is corroborated by the latest archaeological finds at puhar of remains of Buddhist monasteries. Then we come to similar references to Buddhism in another poem of the same collection called the *Maduraikkāñji*. In lines 461–67[6] the author Māṅkuḍi Marudanār refers to the Buddhist monasteries in Madura where the Bauddha ladies accompanied by their husbands and children were offering flowers and incense for worship. In lines 475–92[7] the author when speaking **about**

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6. "திண்கதிர் மதாணியொண்குறு மாக்களை
யோம் பினர்த்தழீஇத்தாம் புணர்ந்து முயங்கித்
தாதணிதாமரைப் போது பிடித்தாங்குத்
தாழும வருமோராங்கு விளங்கக்
காமர் கவினிய பேரிளம் பெண்டிர்
பூவினர் புகையினர் தொழுவனர் பழிச்சிச்
சிறந்து புறங்காக்குங் கடவுட்பள்ளியும்".

(Madu. 461–67)

7. "வண்டுபடப் பழுநிய தேனார் தோற்றத்துப்
பூவும் புகையுஞ் சாவகர் பழிச்சச்
சென்ற காலமும் வருஉ மமயமு
மின்றி வட்டோன்றிய வொழுக்கமொடு நன்குணர்ந்து
வானமு நிலனுந் தாமுழுதுணருஞ்
சான்ற கொள்கைச் சாயா யாக்கை
யான்றடங் கறிஞர் செறிந்தனர் நோன்மார்
கல்லொளிந்தன்ன விட்டுவாய்க் கரண்டைப்
பல்புரிச் சிமிலி நாற்றி நல்குவர
கயங்கண்டன்ன வயங்குடை நகரத்துச்
செம்பு இயன்றன்ன செஞ்சுவர் புனைந்து
நோக்கு விசை தவிர்ப்ப மேக்குயர்ந்ததாங்கி
இறும்பூது சான்ற தறும் பூஞ் சேக்கை
குன்றுபல குழீஇப் பொலிவனதோன்ற

the different religious cults prevailing in the city of Madura mentions the Jaina and Bauddha ascetics. From this reference we understand that the Jaina and Bauddha ascetics resided not in monasteries but in gardens. The Śrāvakas or Jaina house holders[8] were worshipping in their temples with painted walls with flowers and incense. They understood the past and the future as well as what occurred in the present and explained them to people. They also knew what passed on in the three worlds. Even though they were practising ascetic habits they had unfading bodies. They carried in many threaded loops small mouthed pots looking as if they were cut out of stone...... They lived in gardens full of wonderful flowers. As these northern cults had not gained so much of strength and popularity as to displace or absorb the ancient Tamil faith and as they had not secured much royal patronage, they existed side by side without engaging themselves in any fierce conflict with each other which was characteristic of a later age. The Śaṅgam Age was one of perfect peace and complete toleration.

From these scattered and indirect references to Buddhism we land on a safe and firm ground when we come to examine the twin epics, the *Śilappadikāram* and the *Maṇimēkhalai.* Some scholars are inclined to argue that these epics do not come under the category of Śaṅgam works. But the consensus of opinion is in favour of treating them as pronounced Śaṅgam works. Whatever may be the accepted opinion, the material which these epics treat of is valuable from our point of view as it throws a flood of light

"அச்சமும் அவலமும் ஆர்வமும் நீக்கி
செற்றமும் உவகையும் செய்யாது காத்து
ஞெமன் கோலன்ன செம்மைத்தாகி
சிறந்த கொள்கை ஆறுங்கூறு அவையமும்"

(Madu. 475–92).

8. Śrāvakas means Jaina house-holders. See *Pattuppāṭṭu*-Nacchinārkiniyar, p. 392, footnote 1.

on Buddhism. It may be said that the age of these epics, which is by common consent placed in the second century A. D. marks the heyday of South Indian Buddhism. There are scholars who assign these epics to a still later date as the 7th or 8th century A.D. In the present context we are not concerned with the chronology of these texts and without entering into details suffice it to say that a careful study of the two works would reveal the fact that they are contemporary not only to each other but also to the events they narrate. Though they are two different works in the form in which they are accessible to us now they are regarded as together constituting one poem as the story is one continuous story and the authors intended that each one should be a supplement to the other so that the two together might form a complete epic. There are sufficient references in the *Śilappadikāram* and the *Maṇimēkhalai* to prove that the two authors were contemporaries and that as a matter of fact it was Śāttan, the author of the *Maṇimēkhalai* who inspired Iḷaṅgō to write his immortal epic, *Śilappadikāram*. The circumstances which led to the composition of these two epics are well described in the 'Padikam of the *Śilappadikāram*. The hill kuṟavas narrate to Iḷaṅgō, who after renouncing his royalty is residing in the Kuṇavāyil Kōṭṭam the incident of how the chaste lady Pattini was carried to Heaven by the Dēvas. Thereupon Śāttan who is also stated to have been beside Iḷaṅgō takes it up and begins to narrate all the details of how this happened.[9] After closing his narrative Śāttan tells Iḷaṅgō: "So we shall write a poem with songs illustrating the three truths that Dharma will become the God of Death to kings who swerve from the path of Righteousness, that it is natural for great men to adore a chaste lady of great fame, and that Destiny will manifest itself

9. *Śilappadikāram*, Padikam, lines 10-54.

and be fulfilled."[10] Śāttan then tells Iḷaṅgō that it is only proper that he (Iḷaṅgō) should write this poem as it relates to incidents with which the three crowned monarchs of the Tamil land were concerned.[11] Iḷaṅgō readily complies with the request of his friend and composes the *Śilappadikāram* and the Padikam ends thus: "These stories which are narrated in poetic form by Iḷaṅgō Aḍigaḷ were heard by Kūlavāṇikan Śāttan of Madura."[12] This is sufficient proof to show that the two poets were not only contemporaries but that the work *Śilappadikāram* was written, thanks to the inspiration given by the other poet Śāttanār. Similarly the Padikam of the *Maṇimēkhalai* says that Śāttan read out his work, *Maṇimēkhalai* to Iḷaṅgō and that the latter listened to it with great kindness.[13] Thus it is

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10. '*Śilappadikāram*, Padikam, lines 55–60
"அரைசியல் பிழைத் தோர்க்கறங் கூற்றாவதூஉ
முரைசால்ப த்தினிக்குயர்ந்தோரேத்துலு
மூழ்வினையுருத்து வந்தூட்டு மென்பதூஉஞ்
சூழ்வினை சிலம்புக் காரணமாகச்
சிலப்பதிகாரமென்னும் பெயரா
னாட்டுதும் யாமோர் பாட்டுடைச் செய்யுள்"

11. '*Śilappadikāram*, Padikam, lines 61–62
"முடிகெழுவேந்தர் மூவர்க்கு முரிய
தடிகணீரேயருளுக"

12. '*Śilappadikāram*, Padikam, lines 87–89.
"முரையுடையிட்ட பாட்டுடைச் செய்யு
ளுரை சாலடிகளருள, மதுரைக்
கூலவாணிகன் சாத்தன் கேட்டனன்."

13. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Padikam, lines 95–98.
"இளங்கோ வேந்தன் அருளிக் கேட்ப
வளங்கெழு கூலவாணிகன் சாத்தன்
மாவண் தமிழ்த்திறம் மணிமேகலை துறவு
ஆறைம் பாட்டினுள் அறிய வைத்தனனென்."

evident that the poets were contemporaries and that their literary productions were the outcome of their close collaboration. Their contemporaneity is in evidence not only in the prologues and the epilogues, but also in the body of the *Śilappadikāram* itself where the author brings in references to this Śāttan, author of the *Maṇimēkhalai*, thus pointing out beyond doubt that Śāttan was contemporary with himself and his brother.[14] A study of the two epics would lead us to the irresistible conclusion that without the one the other becomes an incomplete narrative, and that to get a complete picture it is necessary that we should treat the two as constituting one single work. This view is confirmed by the work itself and the *'Nūṟkaṭṭurai'* or the epitome of the epic says: "So ends the *Śilappadikāram* which really ends with the contents of the story in the *Maṇimēkhalai*". Moreover the *Maṇimēkalai* does not deal with the birth, parentage and early life of its heroine Maṇimēkhalai for it has been already dealt with in the *Silappadikāram*. On the other hand it deals with only one phase of her career, viz. her renunciation and her joining the Buddhist order. In fact the Padikam of the *Maṇimēkhalai* calls the work "*Maṇimēkhalai Tuṟavu*" or '*Renunciation of Maṇimēkhalai*' Besides, the work is said to be referred to in the commentary of *Nīlakēsi* as '*Maṇimēkhalai Tuṟavu*'. And these give further support to the view that the *Maṇimēkhalai* is only a continuation of the *Śilappadikāram*.

This position is taken up by Aḍiyārkunallār, the commentator of the *Śilappadikāram*, and it would be worthwhile to note his observations. He lays it down that a Kāppiyam must subserve the four main ends of life and raises the question that the *Śilappadikāram* stops with the first three and does not appear to treat separately of the fourth. He gives a number of references in his work itself to the renunciation of Maṇimēkhalai

14. *Śilappadikāram*, Canto XXV, lines 65–66.
"கண்களி மயக்கத்துக் காதலோடிருந்த
தண்டமிழாசான் சாத்தனி ஃதுரைக்கும்."

and concludes "that having learnt that Maṇimēkhalai had renounced life, the author of the *Śilappadikāram*, Iḷaṅgō Aḍigaḷ set this at the end of his own work, and wished to treat the complete work as a Mahākāvya treating of the four objects of life. When he communicated his resolution to Śāttan, his friend, Śāttan told him in reply that he had already composed a work on Maṇimēkhalai, making her renunciation the subject, and illustrative of the two main objects of life, Dharma and Mōksha. Iḷaṅgō wished that the two should find vogue in the world as one Kāvya. Notwithstanding this these are regarded as two because two authors composed them."[15] Therefore it is evident from this that *Maṇimēkhalai* was composed first by Śāttanār who knew all the details of Maṇimēkhalai's life from her renunciation during the period when Śeṅguṭṭuvan consecrated a temple to Pattinidēvi in his 50th year to her entering the Buddhist cloister at Kāñchī under the tutelage of Aṟavaṇa Aḍigaḷ and that the *Śilappadikāram* was completed only shortly after the completion of the *Maṇimēkhalai.*

Serious doubts are entertained by some eminent scholars[16] as to whether these works could be assigned a rank among the Saṅgam works and attempts are made to prove that the epics belong to the post Saṅgam period. But this assumption would militate against the fact that Tamil tradition maintains that the author of the *Maṇimēkhaḷai*, Śāttanār was one of the Śaṅgam 49[17] and that he belonged to the same age as poets like Paraṇar and Kapilar, who, as we know were the most distinguished poets

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15. Dr. S. Krishṇaswāmi Iyeṅgar: *Maṇimēkhalai in its Historical Setting*, pp.2-3
16. For example, P. T. Srīnivāsa Iyeṅgar: *History of the Tamils*, *pp*.372-82 and 596-606; K.N. Sivarāja Piḷḷai: *Chronology of the Early Tamils*, p.42.
17. A verse contribution included in the so-called *Tiru-vaḷḷuvamalai* said to have been composed in appreciation of the *Kuṟaḷ* is attributed to him.

associated with the traditional Third Śaṅgam. Tradition also speaks of Śāttan's close friendship with both king Seṅguṭṭuvan and his ascetic brother Iḷaṅgō Aḍigaḷ. Śeṅguṭṭuvan was undoubtedly a Śaṅgam celebrity and figures prominently in the Saṅgam works.[18] Therefore it stands to reason that Śāttanār, Iḷaṅgō and Śeṅguṭṭuvan all belonged to one age, i.e the Śaṅgam age. There is no warrant for the assumption that Śāttanār, the author of the *Maṇimēkhalai* is a different person from the Śāttanār of the Śangam, and if we are to believe in the authorship of these epics it is not unjustifiable to assign them a place among the Śaṅgam works. It may be said here that this tradition of contemporaneity of these works with the Śaṅgam period is accepted by later commentators. Tamil literary tradition also accepts that these are works of classic exteellence in Tamil Literature.

One strong evidence in support of the 2nd century A. D. as the date of the two epics is that there is no indication anywhere in these works of the existence of the Pallavas known to history. Both the epics make frequent mention of Kāñchī but nowhere do we find any reference to the Pallavas. From these epics we are given to understand that Kāñchī remained a Viceroyalty under the supremacy of the Chōḷas till the advent of the Pallavas in that Pallavas in that region and that the princes of the Chōḷa line often became Viceroys. The initial date of Pallava rule in Kāñchī must be sometime in the beginning of the third century A.D. and we have got inscriptional evidence as to the date of the earliest Pallava rulers of Kāñchī. Thus the clean omission by these epics to mention the Pallavas whenever referring to Kāñchī is obviously due to the fact that these works belonged to the pre-Pallava period i.e. before the 3rd century A.D. The Śaṅgam literature affords us evidence for a remarkable change with regard to the Viceroyalty of Kāñchī for we hear

18. *Padiṟṟuppattu* 5th Ten. *Puranānuru* Ode 369 *Ahanānūṟu* Ode 212.

of the Viceroyalty being placed in the hands of a Toṇḍamān chieftain by name Iḷam Tirayan.[19] The epics under consideration do not mention anywhere about this incident of placing the Viceroyalty in the hands of Iḷam Tirayan where as we have one reference to his birth in the *Maṇimēkhalai*,[20] that too not precise. Perhaps, the passing of Kāñchī into the hands of Toṇḍaimān Iḷam Tirayan was a later incident. So far as the evidence of the two epics goes we are familiar with a Kāñchī under the Viceroyalty of the Chōḷa princes. Thus the complete silence of the two epics with regard to the Pallavas or any member of that dynasty could be accounted for only in the light of the fact that the Pallavas came to rule at Kāñchī after the composition of the two epics.

Then the date 2nd century A.D. for these two epics stands on the solid foundation of the Śeṅguṭṭuvan–Gajabāhu synchronism, the 'sheet-anchor' of early South Indian history. The name of Gajabāhu occurs in the body of the epic *Śilappadikāram*[21] as one among those that attended the ceremony of the consecration of the temple to Pattinidēvi by Śenguṭṭuvan at Vañji and the statement in the *Śilappadikāram* that Gajabāhu on his return to Ceylon ordered a shrine in honour of the Pattinikaḍavuḷ to be constructed and an annual festival to be celebrated in her honour receives confirmation from the Ceylonese works of a later age like the *Rājaratnākaraya* and the *Rājāvaliya* though the earlier chronicles like the *Dīpavaṁśa* and the *Mahāvaṁśa* are silent about it. The *Rājāvaliya* besides speaking of Gajabāhu I's invasion of the Chōḷa country specifically refers to the incident of Gajabāhu's obtaining the gem anklet of the Goddess pattini[22] and the fact that the tradition of Pattinidēvi has for long had a hold

19. *Perumbāṇāṟṟuppaḍai.*
20. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXIV, lines 54–59
21. *Śilappadikāram* Canto XXX, lines 155–64.
22. *J. R. A. S.* (*Ceylon Branch*) Vol. XIII, No. 44, p. 81

on the people of Ceylon strengthens this view.[23] "To deny totally a tradition which receives corroboration from an external source viz. the *Pāli literature of Ceylon* and thus to shake the corner stone of ancient South Indian chronology would be a breach of the historical and critical method."[24] Again the *Mahāvamsa* speaks of two Gajabāhus, the first being the son of Vaṅkanāsika Tissa and and he is said to have reigned between 171 and 193 A. D. [25] The second Gajabāhu is said to have come in the 12th century A. D. and the reference in the *S'ilappadikāram* cannot be to Gajabāhu II and it would be nothing short of absurdity to assign this work to such a late date. Then the question arises whether there could not have been a Gajabāhu in between the two Gajabāhus mentioned in the Ceylonese works. Prof. Raṅgāchārya thinks that this is probable on the ground that the minor Ceylonese chronicles like *The Rājāvali* and the *Rājaratnākari* mention the name of a king Gahaba who is also associated with an expedition to the Chōḷa country; and this Gahaba, he assumes, may be a corruption of the word Gajabahu.[26] But this argument is not convincing for, the *Mahāvamśa* unmistakably refers to the term Gajabāhu which is certainly different from Gahaba. We know that Gajabāhu I came to the throne in 171 A. D. and assuming that he must have visited the Chēra country after he became King, it would not be wrong to suppose that the consecration of the temple to Pattinidēvi must have taken place in say, 172 or 173 A.D. Thus it is on the .strength of this Gajabāhu synchronism that the two epics may be assigned to the latter half of the 2nd century A.D.

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23. *Journal of Indian History,* Vol. XII, p. 215
24. V. R. R. Dīkshitar: *S'ilappadikāram,* Introduction, p. 16
25. Geiger's Translation of *Mahāvamśa* (Pāli Text Society) Introduction, p. XXXVIII
26. *Educational Review,* February 1929

Lastly the state of religious life which is reflected in the *Śilappadikāram* on the one hand and the works of a later date like the devotional hymns of the Śaivasamayāchāryas and the Vaishṇava Āḻwārs on the other would serve as a valuable clue to fix the date of these epics as the 2nd century A.D. Controversy aside, the *Śilappadikāram* in particular reveals to us a vast panorama of cults and religions ranging from that of Indra and that of the nature Gods to that of Bhakti or fervent devotion to Śiva or Vishṇu and the religious life in those days was characterised by complete toleration. Prof. K. A. Nilakaṇṭa Śāstri observes: "We have only to recall the enumeration of the temples in Puhār (Canto V), the Vēṭṭuvavāri (Canto XII) and the Āycchiyar Kuravai (Canto XVII) in the *Śilappadikāram* and contrast these with the fervid devotion to Śiva and to Vishṇu coupled with an equally fervid hatred of the herotic sects of Buddhism and Jainism that mark the sectarian hymns of the *Tēvāram* and the *Tiruvāimoḻi* and we at once realize that there is no difficulty involved in assuming an interval of some centuries between the two ages ...... It will now be clear that there is a strong prima facie case for accepting the chronological indications of the Gajabāhu synchronism and referring the Śaṅgam works to the early centuries of the Christian era. And this arrangement could not be shaken except by arguments of equal cogency which do not conflict with the general probabilities of South Indian history."[27]

We have so far attempted to give in broad out lines the arguments in favour of fixing 2nd century A. D. as the date of these two epics without entering into minute details of chronology. Now we shall proceed to examine the contents of the two epics and see what light they throw on the state of Buddhism in the Tamil country.

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27. Prof. K. A. Nīlakaṇṭa Śāstri: *The Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*, pp. 18–19

We shall first take into consideration the *Śilappadikāram* and before examining the actual contents of the work it would not be out of place to say something about its author. Iḷaṅgō was the second son of the Chēra king Neḍuñchēralātan and the younger brother of Sēran Śeṅguṭṭuvan and hence his name Iḷaṅgō or younger prince. Such a man associated so closely with the royal family was destined to give up the pleasures of the palace and take to the life of an ascetic. The circumstances under which he renounced royalty are admirably described by the poet himself in his immortal work.[28] As he was one day sitting with his father and brother in the palace at Vañji, an astrologer who came to the court looked at both the young princes and pointed to the younger prince as the one who bore in his body the astrological marks indicative of kingship. It was an age when immense faith was placed in astrology and the elder of the two, Śeṅguṭṭuvan received this news with great sorrow and disappointment. The younger, our poet, noticing the sorrow of his brother never wanted to remain an obstacle in the fulfilment of his brother's aspirations. Much disturbed by the

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28. "வேள்விச்சாலையில் வேந்தன் பெயர்ந்தபின்
யானுஞ் சென்றேன் என்னெதிரெழுந்து
தேவந்திகை மேற்றிகழ்ந்து தோன்றி
வஞ்சிமூதூர் மணி மண்டபத்திடை
நுந்தை தாணிழவிருந்தோய் நின்னை
அரை சுவீற்றிருக்கும் திருப்பொறியுண்டென்று
உரைசெய்தவன் மேலுருத்து நோக்கிக்
கொங்கவிழ் நறுந்தார்க் கொடித்தேர் தானைச்
செங்குட்டுவன் தன்செல்லல் நீங்கப்
பகல்செல்வாயிற் படியோர் தம்முன்
அகவிடப்பாரம் அகல நீக்கிச்
சிந்தை செல்லாச் சேணெடுந்தூரத்து
அந்தமிலின் பத்தரசான் வேந்துஎன
என்றிற முரைத்த இமையோரிளங்கொடி"

—Śilappadikāram, Canto XXX 170–83

thought that his elder brother's right of succession might be interfered with by reason of the astrologer's remarks he at once renounced the world and lived the life of an ascetic. Considering it improper to continue to live in the palace after becoming an ascetic, Iḷaṅgō left the palace and settled in a temple called Kuṇavāyil kōṭṭam on the eastern side of the capital devoting his time wholly to art and literature. It was from then that the suffix *Aḍigaḷ* was attached to his name. No wonder the life of seclusion which he had now taken upon himself was quite conducive to his literary pursuits and helped him to become an accomplished scholar as is seen from his epic. Probably he had at first planned to write the two epics, the *Śilappadikāram* and the *Maṇimēkhalai* himself but having come to know that the *Maṇimēkhalai* had been already begun and completed by his own friend and contemporary Śāttanār, he contented himself with the writing of the *Śilappadikāram*[29]. Like the other poets of the period he was not going about from court to court lavishly showering on kings and chieftains encomiums but he wrote his work with the spirit of a historian with a perfectly impartial mind. He gave equal importance to the Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya kings as he did to his brother and nowhere could we find any exaggerated account about his brother and his achievements.

His religion:

There are conflicting opinions regarding the religion of Iḷaṅgō. For example Mahāmahōpādhyāya U. V. Śwāminātha Iyer is of opinion that the author's religion was Śaivism[30] and he quotes a number of passages like,

"நிலவுக் கதிர் முடித்த நீளிருஞ் சென்னி
உலகுபொதியுருவத் துயர்ந்தோன் சேவடி

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29. See the Padikam of the *Śilappadikāram*.

30. Mahāmahōpādhyāya. U. V. Śwāminātha Iyer: *Śilappadikāram* Introduction, p. XVII.

"மறஞ்சேர் வஞ்சிமா லையொடுபுனைந்
திறைஞ் சாச் சென்னியிறைஞ்சி வலங்கொண்டு".
(Canto XXVI, lines 54–57),
"செஞ்சடை வானவனருளில் விளங்க
வஞ்சித் தோன்றிய வானவ கேளாய்"
(Canto XXVI, lines 98–99),
"ஆனேறூர்ந் தோனருளினிற் றோன்றி
மாநிலம் விளக்கிய மன்னவனாதலின்".

(Canto XXX, lines 141–42) — all of which go to show that his brother Śeṅguṭṭuvan's religion was Śaivism and argues that his brother Iḷaṅgō's religion must also be the same. But it need not necessarily be so. The late Mr. Kanakasabai says that Iḷaṅgō became a monk of the Nirgrantha sect.[31] This view that he was a Jain receives support from the fact that he has referred elaborately in his work to Jainism, its tenets and institutions. Moreover the term aḍigaḷ that is used as the suffix to his name, coupled with the fact that the great commentator of the work, Aḍiyārkunallār interprets the term 'Kuṇavāyil kōṭṭam' occuring in the poem as 'Arukan Kōil' the name generally given to Jain temples, lends support to the view that he was a Jain. Objections to this theory may also be brought forward viz. that the term aḍigaḷ is only an honorophic term used by any saintly person irrespective of the religion to which he belonged;[32] that the term 'Kōṭṭam' is a general name for temple and it need not necessarily be a Jain temple;[33] and lastly, that his frequent reference to Jainism in the work may be due to the fact that the wave of Jainism was spreading wide

31. Mr. V. Kanakasabai: *The Tamils 1800 years ago*, p. 208

32. Prof. V. R. R. Dīkshitar: *Śilappadikāram*, p. 68.

33. *Ibid*, p. 69

in his time and that, engaged, as he was, in narrating contemporary events he could not but refer more than once to one and the same thing.[34] One remarkable thing about Iḷaṅgō is his tolerant attitude towards the other sects and unlike Śāttanār he is not a great partisan. He appears to be non-sectarian as could be seen throughout his work. If at all he had any leaning towards any sect it must have been towards Buddhism. That Iḷaṅgō was a close friend of Śāttanār, an ardent Buddhist, and that his (Iḷaṅgō) epic *Śilappadikāram* was part of the great Buddhist epic, the *Maṇimēkhalai*, strengthens this view and if Iḷaṅgō had no sympathy or admiration for Buddhism we could not expect him to listen with 'great kindness' to the poem composed by Śāttanār as is mentioned in the Padikam.[35] But from this it would be wrong to come to the conclusion that Iḷaṅgō was a devot Buddhist in the sense Śāttanār was. But it would be more appropriate to suppose that Iḷaṅgō was an eclectic with strong sympathies for Buddhism.[36] And the fact that Buddhism had not only attracted the attention of such an eminent person like the brother of the ruling monarch but also evoked in him a keen interest testifies to its prominence and popularity in the Chēra country.

In the city of Puhār on the banks of the river Kāvērī there lived two merchant princes, Māśāttuvān and Mānāikkan. It was arranged between these two that Kōvalan, the son of the former should be married to Kaṇṇaki the daughter of the latter. The marriage was celebrated with the pomp and ceremony befitting the wealth and rank of the parents and the bridegroom of sixteen and the bride of twelve lived together happily for some years. Kōvalan, unfortunately fell in love with a very

34. V. R. R. Dīkshitar: *Studies in Tamil literature and History*, p. 73.
35. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Padikam, lines 95–98.
36. Dr. P. C. Alexander: *Buddhism in Kēraḷa*, p. 38.

comely dancing woman by name Mādhavi, deserted his home and wife and spent some years with her, losing all his immense fortune. In a moment of contrition he resolved to go away from that place to Madura with a view to rehabilitating himself by setting up business. His one difficulty was want of capital and his devoted and obedient wife Kaṇṇaki offered to part with the only one of her jewels yet left with her for the purpose. The husband and the wife started on their journey and after several adventures in the course of the journey, reached Madura. Leaving his wife in the house of a woman of the shepherd caste, Kōvalan passed through the streets of Madura with the view of selling the Anklet. He met a goldsmith and showed him the anklet and the goldsmith who was already under suspicion of having stolen an anklet belonging to the queen of Madura desired to place the charge on Kōvalan and under the pretext of taking the anklet to be shown to the Pāṇḍya king he went to the court and informed the king that he had found out the thief who had stolen the queen's anklet. The king without enquiry ordered his guards to behead Kōvalan if he was in possession of the anklets resembling that of the queen and he was accordingly beheaded. Kaṇṇaki having heard of this calamity proceeded to the palace of the Pāṇḍya king, proved her husband's innocence and charged the king of injustice and finally in a fit of rage and revenge called upon the Gods to burn the city and got across the borders into the Chēra country and was taken to Heaven by the Gods in the celestial car. This in short is the subject matter of the epic *Silappadikāram*.

Barring the lengendary portions and the miraculous elements introduced into the two epics, more frequently in the *Maṇimēkhalai* than in the *Silappadikāram*, these works contain a variety of information, political, social and religious which provides valuable data for the construction of the history of the Tamil country in the first three centuries of the Christian era. The *Silappadikāram* being a contribution by a poet, who was himself

a prince of the Chēra court has got an additional merit of giving us most authentic and reliable information regarding the royal courts, the ruling monarchs and the relation of states with one another. He also gives us a true picture of the social and religious conditions as prevailed in those days, the various fine arts and other details of administrative interest.

Social and Religious conditions.

"If the *Maṇimēkhalai* can be characterised as a philosophic co-religious work, the *Silappadikāram* can be said to be a treatise on political and social life" for the *Śilappadikāram* throws abundant light on the social and religious conditions that prevailed in those days. The events narrated in the work take place in all the three capital cities of the Tamil country and hence the poet has given a detailed and graphic description of the three cities, Describing Vañji, the author says that it had a strong fortress and outside the fortress there were temples, public halls and mathās where Jaina and Bauddha ascetics and penance performers lived. Then the author describes the different streets where men of different occupations lived. Beyond these were situated the residences of kings, Brāhmins, ministers and other high officials of state. Besides these there were a number of shady places, artificial hills, ponds, dharmaśāla and tavappaḷḷi and there was also a Bauddha Chaitya. That Vañji was a place where different faiths flourished side by side is also borne out by the fact that Maṇimēkhalai chose that place for her enquiry into the philosophy of the different religions before embracing the Buddhist faith. Puhār is also described as a flourishing port and the wealthiest city of Tamilnad as a result of its commercial activity with foreign countries. People of different religious persuasions are said to have lived in that great city. The city contained lofty and magnificient buildings which reveal to us the advanced stage of architecture attained by the ancient Tamils. So also the city of Madura is described. The villages were also prosperous and they enjoyed

practically full freedom in the management of their internal affairs with the help of the village councils consisting of village elders. Between one village and another the route was covered by thick forests as pictured by Iḷaṅgō when he describes the route from Puhār to Madura[37]. In general the people seem to have lived a contented and happy life under the benevolent and just rule of the three great monarchs. Social life was very much enlivened by people frequently holding amusements like, Music, dancing and dumb shows. The women occupied a high status in society. The *Śilappadikāram* contains quite an interesting and informing chapter furnishing us a wealth of details on music and dancing as prevalent in those days. There was ritual singing and ritual dancing. The Araṅgēṟṟukādai, Kānalvari, Vēniṟkādai, Āycchiyar kuravai, Kunṟakkuravai and Vēṭṭuvavāri–all these may be said to be literal discourses on music and dancing. Above all one remarkable feature of the social life of the people in those days was that, despite the fact that the cities consisted of several groups of people professing different religious faiths, social security and amity were not marred by any outburst of religious fanaticism. As we shall see Śeṅguṭṭuvan was a tolerant monarch and allowed the so-called heretical religions like the Ājīvika, Jaina and Bauddha to flourish side by side with Hinduism. No doubt distinctions and differences are inevitable especially in the religious field and these were confined to the high level of doctrinairre matters and the people of the age, to which belonged these epics, did not descend to the level of cutting each other's throats merely because they professed different faiths. Religious persecution, either by individuals or kings was quite unknown to the Tamils and this position is in striking contrast with that of a later age when the Nāyanmārs and Āḻvārs indulged in endless hostilities with the Buddhists and Jains and spoke in condemnation of their tenets, and in that period we have a

37. *Śilappadikāram*, Cantos X and XI.

number of instances where the kings themselves took to a policy of persecution, not to speak of individuals. Thus as Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar says:[38] "In matters religious there was a happy confusion. Jains, Buddhists, Brāhmins, Śaivas, Vaishṇavas and peoples of other persuasions both major and minor, all lived together and at peace with one another...... The three rival systems of the Brahmans and those of the Jains and the Buddhists flourished together each with its own clientele unhampered by others in the prosecution of its own holy rights... The whole attitude both of the orthodox and also of the heterodox, in matters religious, was the pity of the one for the ignorance of the other; but nothing more bitter."

The *Śilappadikāram* reveals to us a vast pantheon of gods and goddesses like Śiva, Vishṇu, Indra, Muruga and Baladēva,[39] Durgā, Lakshmī and Sarasvati, the respective consorts of Śiva, Vishṇu and Brahma[40] on the one hand, and those of the Ājīvika, Bauddha and Jaina on the other. The worship of the Dēvī as Goddess of victory and of Maṇimēkhalai as the guardian deity of the sea is seen in the poem. The ritual dance Vēṭṭuvavāri was performed in honour of Koṟṟavai who is often praised as the destroyer of Mahishaśura. The whole of Canto XII is a description of the ritual dance. The ritual dance associated with Vishṇu was called Kuravaikkūttu in which women largely participated. When any indication of any evil or disaster to the city was noted, the people generally resorted to the performance of this dance and it was believed that any evil could be averted by invoking the God through this ritual dance. When Kōvalan

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38. Dr. S. K. Aiyaṅgar: *Beginnings of South Indian History*, pp. 143–45

39. *Śilappadikāram*, Canto V, lines 169–179.

40. *Ibid*, Canto XII, lines 67–72.

was executed we hear of a Kuravaikkūttu being arranged by Mādari and her daughter Aiyai.[41] Another occasion when this Kūttu was performed was when Kaṇṇaki, after the conflagration reached Neḍuvēḷkunṟam in the Chēra country. When she was standing on the hill under a vēṅgai tree she was taken in a celestial car to Heaven and the dance was arranged by the women of the hill in honour of Kaṇṇaki.[42] Again there is evidence in the *Śilappadikāram* for the existence of temples to the Sun God, the Moon God, the Kalpa tree, the Airāvada etc.[43] In more than one place there are references to Vēdic Brāhmins and their Vēdic rites. Mr. Kanakasabai gives the reader an altogether wrong impression when he refers to the fewness of Brāhmins during this age.[44] The whole range of the Śaṅgam literature shows a great familiarity with this caste and associates it with the 'triple fire', the 'twice born' nature and 'six duties' which are the distinguishing characteristics of Brāhmins. The *Śilappadikāram* gives a beautifully suggestive evidence of the great number of Brāhmins when it describes[45] the volume of smoke ever seen rising up in the skies in the city of Puhār from out of the sacrificial fire or the Brāhmins. The Āryan ideas of God, their Purāṇic and Itihāsa stories, their modes of worship and their philosophic abstractions had already entered into the Tamil land. Besides these Jainism and Buddhism had also completely entered and begun to influence the life and behaviour

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41. *Śilappadikāram*, Canto XVII.
42. *Ibid*, Canto XXIV
43. *Ibid*, Canto IX, lines 9 to 15
4. Kanakasabai, *Tamils 1800 years ago*, pp. 55–56
45. *Śilappadikāram*, Canto X, lines 144–47

"மறையோராக்கிய வாவுதி நறும்புகை
இறையுயர் மாடமெங்கனும் போர்த்து
மஞ்சுசூழ் மலையின் மாணத்தோன்றும்
மங்கல மறையோரிருக் கையன்றியும்".

of the people. But in spite of this, in the far off villages and hills we are able to see the bedrock of early Tamil worship still maintained by the unsophisticated village folk who follow their own mode of worship. The genius of the Tamil people was such that they borrowed freely from their North Indian brethren while yet preserving their individuality.

Thus the *Śilappadikāram* portrays a picture where a Śaiva, a Vaishṇava and a Bauddha and a Jaina hob-nob with one another. The reason is not far to seek. The orthodox sects and the so-called dissenting sects were all agreed in their fundamental doctrines but differed in detailing the practical definition of their creed and the pragmatic means for the realisation of the ultimate purpose. Such an outlook on life and attitude towards religion provided ample scope for difference in thought and belief. It was on questions of high philosophy and metaphysics that such distinctions were maintained and the common man to whom higher philosophy was a sealed book did not trouble himself about it. Religious discussions attracted the attention of only the intelligentsia and differences of opinion were treated with mutual respect and they gave no cause for quarrels among the people. In short "the sectarian spirit was totally absent and every person was both a Śaiva and a Vaishṇava. Mādari, a devotee of Krishṇa paid respects to Kavundi Aḍigaḷ, a Jain Sanyāsini"[46]. Another instance in point is Śēran Śenguṭṭuvan himself. On the eve of his expedition to the north he is said to have worshipped Śiva and bore His feet on his head as a mark of respect. At this time the priests from the Vaishṇava shrine at

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46. V. R. R. Dikshitar: *Śilappadikāram*, Introduction, p. 48, *Śilappadikāram*, Canto XV, lines 118–19

"ஆயர் முதுமகள் மாதரியென்போள்
காவுந்தியைக் கண்டடி தொழலும்."

Āṭakamāṭam[47] gave him a garland of flowers which with equal respect and veneration he wore on his shoulders.[48]

Coming then to a detailed examination of the epic *Śilappadikāram* it may be pointed out at the outset that there are only very few references to Buddhism in this epic and probably the author omitted to deal with it elaborately because it has been treated very elaborately in the companion work *Maṇimēkhalai*. As the author intended his work to go hand in hand with the *Maṇimēkhalai*, perhaps he thought any detailed account about Buddhism in his work would be superfluous. The main purpose of the author of the *Maṇimēkhalai* seems to be the exaltation of Buddism and the glorification of its tenets. This being the conscious purpose, the author spares no effort to utilise his characters and available opportunities

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47. The commentatory identifies this place with Trivandrum and the Vaishṇava shrine mentioned there with the Padmanābhaśwami temple. But Paṇḍit R. Rāghava Iyeṅgar is inclined to identify the place with Karūr and the temple with the Raṅganātha temple there, for once that it is established that Karūr was the capital of the Chēras we have to look to the place and temple somewhere near Karūr or in Karūr itself. It is unlikely that priests from Trivandrum would have come all the way to the Chēra capital to offer the praśādam to Śeṅguṭṭuvan.

48. *Śilappadikāram*, Canto XXVI, lines 62–67

"ஆடகமாடத் தறிதுயி லமர்ந்தோன்
சேடங்கொண்டு சிலர் நின்றேத்தத்
தெண்ணீர் கரந்த செஞ்சடைக்கடவுள்
வண்ணச்சேவடி மணிமுடி வைத்தலின்
ஆங்கது வாங்கியணி மணிப்புயத்துத்
தாங்கினனா கித்தகைமையிற் செல்வுழி"

as a means to serve this end, whereas the *Śilappadikāram* assumes a non-sectarian attitude[49]. But the omission by Iḷaṅgō of an elaborate treatment of Buddhism in his work may be explained in another light viz. that any elaborate reference to Buddhism and its doctrines is not warranted by the context in the *Śilappadikāram*, for, Buddhism comes into the picture only when Mādhavi and Maṇimēkhalai embrace that faith and this is clearly beyond the province of *Śilappadikāram*[50] whereas Śāttan devotes the whole work to this subject since it fits in with the events narrated. So also there are only few references to the Śamaṇās and Ājīvikas in the *Śilappadikāram* and to know about them in detail we have again to turn to the other epic. Iḷaṅgō is not a sectarian like Sāttan and he makes his characters worship different deities at the same time, for instance, we see Kōvalan and Kaṇṇaki circumambulating the temple of Vishṇu and also worshiping at the Jaina shrine.[51] Similarly we know Mādari, the cowherdess a devotee of Krishṇa paying respect to a Jaina ascetic, Kavundiaḍigaḷ. Iḷaṅgō not prone to petty prejudices and rivalries, is a person with very broad outlook and seems to have acquiesced in the doctrine of 'live and let live' especially in the religious field, as a result of which we see him giving equal importance to all the religions. He does not deal specially with any religion and this should not lead us into the belief that he had no faith in nor sympathy to Buddhism. But at the same time, we should not rush to the conclusion that Iḷaṅgō was a Buddhist in the sense Śāttan was and hence from what the *Śilappadikāram* alone has got to say about Buddhism, it would be erroneous to come to a conclusion as to the popularity of that religion in the Tamil country. To estimate the extent of popularity enjoyed by Buddhism in the Tamil

49. Dr. S. K. Aiyaṅgar: *Maṇimēkhalai in its historical setting*, p. 8

50. Dr. P. C. Alexander. *Buddhism in Kēraḷa*, p. 33

51. *Śilappadikāram*, Canto X, lines 9 to 25

Country during that period we have to turn to the *Maṇimēkhalai* which would prove to be a better and safer guide in that respect.

But before going to that subject, it is necessary to piece together the data available in the *Śilappadikāram*. The only clear reference to Buddhism in the whole work occurs when Kōvalan narrates a dream to the Brāhmaṇ Māḍalan in Canto XV. He says that among other things he saw in the dream Mādhavi surrendering her daughter Maṇimēkhalai to a life of asceticism in front of the Buddha, In this work there are references to the Buddha, the Indravihāra of Puhār and the Mābodi[52]. When Kōvalan and Kaṇṇaki left Puhār for Madura, they are said to have crossed the outer gate of their city and then passed by the "seven vihāras made by Indra,[53] where divinities moving in

52. *Śilappadikāram*, Canto X, line 11-14

"பனையைந் தோங்கிய பாசிலைப்போதி
அணிதிகழ் நீழலறவோன்றிரு மொழி
அந்தர சாரிகளறைந்தனர் சாற்றும்
இந்திர வீகாரம்மழுவுடன் போகி"

53. *Śilappadikāram* Canto XXVII, line 92; This vihāra is not constructed by hand or machinery. It is a mind-born institution. According to tradition, Indra caused seven vihāras to be built near the Mābodi tree sacred to the Buddha in the city of Puhār which was the residence of Buddhist monks who were occasionally taught the Buddhist āgama by Buddhist divinities. Dr. Smith says (*Early History of India*, 3rd edition, p. 185) that Mahēndra son of Aśōka, came to the Tamil country and was living in a big vihāra in the Chōḷa country and that the remains of that vihāra were noticed even by Hiuen Tsang. In the light of this there is every reason to assume that the vihāra of Puhār spoken of in the *Śilappadikāram* and *Maṇimēkhalai* could be the same built by Mahēndra and hence its name Indravihāra. But it seems people later attributed this vihāra to God Indra completely forgetting the tradition. The former seems to be more probable.

the sky explained treatises on Dharma which were the divine words of Aṟavōn (the Buddha) under the cool shade of the green bōdi tree which had five lofty branches.' The Vihāra here refers to the Buddhist temple which is frequently mentioned in the *Maṇimēkhalai* also [54] and the Mahābōdhi referred to is the celebrated bōdhi tree under which the Buddha got Enlightenment.[55] It is in this context that reference is made to a Jaina temlpe at which Kōvalan and Kaṇṇaki worshipped.[56] The exact term used here is Śilātala made of moon stone built by Jaina householders for the benefit of the Sāraṇars of Jaina ascetics who would assemble there on festive occasions under the cool shade of the aśōka tree, sacred to them. Again they are referred to as "men of penance" who had abjured meat–eating and taken the vow of speaking the truth alone and purified of all sins, understanding the true path by restraining their senses." Again Buddhist and Jaina institutions are mentioned in canto V[57] where it is said that joy prevailed everywhere. On account of the Indra festival,[58] and without distinction of caste or creed the festival to Indra was celebrated in the temples of Siva, Subrahmaṇya and Baladēva while on the other side of

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54. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXVI, line 55 and XXVIII, line 70
"இந்திர விகாரமேழுமேத்துதலின்;
"இந்திர விகாரமென எழில்பெற்று"
55. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXX line 10
"போதிமூலம் பொருந்தியிருந்து, மாரனை வென்று வீரனுகி"
56. *Śilappadikāram*, Canto X, lines 15–25
57. *Ibid*, Canto V, line 178–179
"வேறுவேறு கடவுளர் சாறுசிறுந் தொருபால்
அறவோர் பள்ளிய, •மறனேம் படையும்."
58. It appears that in the pre–historic days a certain Chōla king Tūṅgayileṟinda Toḍittot Śembiyan (தூங்கையிலெறிந்த தொடித்தோட் செம்பியன்) introduced this festival to be

the town were the Jaina and Buddhist institutions where the Dharma was being preached.

Some details about the Jaina practices and customs are also given. In Canto X is introduced to us the Jaina ascetic Kavundi 'whose residence is said to be in a grove of flowering trees'.[59] Kōvalan and Kaṇṇaki reach her residence and prostrate before her. She blesses them and begins her conversation in which we see her pouring out Jaina sentiments.

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celebrated every year in his capital city Puhār. The festival lasted for 28 days and this tradition was continued by succeeding monarchs for it was believed that by not celebrating it, the Chatukka bhūdam, remaining at the city of Puhār at the command of Indra to check sin and sinners would leave the city thus leading it to desolation and ruin. (*Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto, I, lines 4–9). Years passed on and Neḍumuḍikkiḷḷi became the Chōḷa ruler. One day when he was resting in the royal park he happened to meet a certain beautiful girl and at his request she consented to stay with him for sometime as his wife. One day she suddenly disappeared. While the king was searching for her a certain Buddha Cāraṇa informed him that she was Pīlivaḷai, daughter of the Nāgā king Valaivāṇan and that she would not return but would send her son to him. The ship in which her son was sent was caught in a wreck and knowing this the Chōḷa king, over-whelmed by grief, failed to celebrate the Indra festival that year as result of which the guardian deity of the sea Maṇimēkhala cursed that the city be swallowed by sea. It so happened. (*Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXIV–XXVI).

59. *Śilappadikāram* Canto X, lines 35–36

"வடபெருங் கோட்டு மலர்ப் பொழி னுழைந் து
காவதங் கடந்து கவுந்திப் பள்ளி
பூமரப் பொதும்பர்ப் பொருந்தி"

That Madura also was a seat of Jains is known from what Kavundi says to Kōvalan.[60] She expresses her desire to visit "flawless Madura to worship Aṟavōn by listening to the dharma preached by the 'sinless saints,." The doctrine of Ahimsā of the Jains carried to its utmost, their prohibition of consuming honey. their outfit like the begging bowl, netted bag (uri) and the peacock's feathers are all referred to in this canto.[61] Again in the same canto is referred the residences of Brāhmaṇs and the Yāgas they perform.[62] Lines 176–191 of the same Canto give a long list of names by which Jinēndra is called. In lines 192–213 Kavundi manifests her belief in the Jaina religion. In Canto XI is mentioned the existence of a Jain temple at Uṟaiyūr, called the Kandanpaḷḷi,[63] the sacred hall of the Nirgranthas In Canto XV again Kavundi refers to the residences of the Cāraṇars or Jaina divinities at Puhār provided by the Śāvakas or Jaina householders.[64] From Canto XVI line 18 we are given to

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60. *Śilappadikāram*, Canto X, lines 56–59

"மறவுரை நீத்த மாசறு கேள்வியர்
அறவுரை கேட்டாங் கறிவனை யேத்த
தென்றமிழ் நன்னாட்டுத் தீதுதீர் மதுரைக்
கொன்றிய வுள்ள முடையே னாகலின்"

61. *Ibid*, Canto X, lines 82–101
62. *Ibid*, Canto X, lines 144–147

"மறையோராக்கிய வாவுதிநறும்புகை
இறையுயர் மாடமெங்கணும் போர்த்து
மஞ்சுசூழ் மலையின் மாணத் தோன்றும்
மங்கல மறையோரிருக்கை யன்றியும்"

63. *Ibid*, Canto XI, lines 4–5

"ஆதியிற்றோற்றத்தறிவனை வணங்கிக்
கந்தன் பள்ளிக் கடவுளர்க்கெல்லாம்"

64. *Ibid*, Canto XV lines 151–55

"காவிரிப் படப்பைப் பட்டினந் தன்னுள்
பூவிரி பிண்டிப் பொதுநீங்கு திருநிழல்
உலக நோன்பிகள் ஒருங்குடன் இட்ட
இலங்கொளிச் சிலாதல மேலிருந் தருள்
தருமஞ் சாற்றுஞ் சாரணர் தம்முன்"

understand that Kōvalan was a Jaina householder and Aḍiyārkkunallār interprets this passage in the light of the Jaina custom of not eating after nightfall. In Canto XXVII it is said how Kavundi Aḍigaḷ, coming to know of the death of Kōvalan and Kaṇṇaki felt sorry and took a vow to die of starvation.[65] This practice of committing suicide by starvation is very common amongst the Jaina ascetics and this practice is called "Sallēkana."[66]

From Cantos XV and XVI one would be inclined to believe that Kōvalan and Kaṇṇaki followed certain Jain practices but the evidence of the *Maṇimēkhalai* clearly shows that they were Buddhists. When Maṇimēkhalai visited the temple of her mother Kaṇṇaki at Vañji to worship her, the Goddess is said to have appeared before Maṇimēkhalai and narrated what had happened after Kōvalan's death.[67] From this we may infer that Kōvalan and Kaṇṇaki embraced Buddhism.[68] This belief is

65. *Silappadikāram*, Canto XXVII, lines 79–83.

"தவந்தரு சிறப்பிற் கவுந்தி சீற்றம்
நிவந்தோங்கு செங்கோ லோங்கில வேந்தன்
போகுயிர் தாங்கப் பொறை சாலாட்டி
என்னோடு விவ்விணை யுருத்த தோவென்
உண்ணுநோன் போடுயிர் பதிப் பெயர்த்ததும்."

66. V. R. Dikshitar, *Silappadikāram*, p. 308, footnote 1.

67. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXVI, lines 10–66

68. *Ibid*, Canto XXVI, lines 40–65

"நீங்கரும் பிறவிக் கடலிடை நீந்திப்
பிறந்து இறந்து உழல்வோம் பின்னர்,
மறந்து மழை மறு மகத நன்னாட்டுக்
கொருபெருந் திலக மென்னு மவோருரைக்கசங்
கரவரும் பெருமைக் கபிலையம் பதியி
னளப்பரும் பாரமிதை யளவின்று நிறைத்துத்
துளக்கமில் புத்த ஞாயிறு தோன்றிப்
போதிமூலம் பொருந்தி வந்தருளித்

further strengthened by the fact that the family to which Kōvalan belonged had strong sympathies to the Buddhist sect and sometimes even extended patronage. This is evident from the fact that a certain Kōvalan, one of the predecessors of Kōvalan, the hero of this epic, nine generations before him, built a Chaitya in Vañji and that having been attracted by the teachings of the Buddhists, he gave away his wealth in charity and joined the Buddhist Order of monks[69]. Moreover Kōvalan when asked by Mādhavi to suggest a name for their daughter

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தீதறு நால்வகை வாய்மையுந் தெரிந்து
பன்னிரு சார்பின் பகுதித் தோற்றமும்
அந்நிலையெல்லாம் அழிவுறு வகையும்
இற்றென வியம்பிக் குற்ற வீடெய்தி
யெண்ணருஞ் சக்கரவாள மெங்கணு
மண்ணலறக் கதிர் விரிக்குங்காலைப்
பைந்தொடி தந்தையுடனே பகவ
னிந்திர விகாரமேழு மேத்துதலிற்
"துன்பக் கதியிற் றோற்றர வின்றி
அன்புறு மனத்தோடு அவறைங் கேட்டு
... ...
அவ்வவர் சமயத்தறி பொருள் கேட்டு
மெய்வகையின்மை நினக்கே விளங்கிய
பின்னர்ப் பெரியோன் பிடகநெறி கடவாய்"

69. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXVIII, lines 123–31

"நின்பெருந் தாதைக் கொன்பது வழிமுறை
முன்னோன் கோவலன் மன்னவன் தனக்கு
நீங்காக் காதற் பாங்கனாதலிற்
றுங்கா நல்லறந்தானுங் கேட்டு
முன்னோற் முறைமையிற் படைத்ததையன்றித்
தன்னாலியன்ற தனம் பலகோடி
யெழுநாளெல் லையுவிரவலர்க் கீத்துத்
தொழுதவம் புரிந்தோன் சுகதற்கியற்றிய
வானோங்கு சிமையத்து வாலொளிச் சயித்த
மீனோர்க் கெல்லா மிடர் கெடவியன்றது"

suggests the name of Maṇimēkhalai, the name of the Goddess of the sea, frequently occuring in the Buddhist Jātaka stories [70] The story about Maṇimēkhalai deivam contained in this epic is so strikingly similar to the story contained in the Śasṅkha Jātaka [71] that we are inclined to say that the Jātaka story is completely imported into the epic with slight alterations and this shows that by the time of Śāttanār the Buddhist Jātaka stories had become popularised in the Tamil country. From this we may say that Kōvalan who suggested a name so celebrated in Buddhist lore must have been a Buddhist himself. It now remains to be seen what religions were adopted by other personages occuring in the story like Māśāttuvān, the father of Kōvalan, Mānāikkan, the father of Kaṇṇaki, Mādhavi and Maṇimēkhalai. Māśāttuvān hearing of his son Kōvalan's unjust execution at the hands of the Pāṇḍya ruler, and Kaṇṇaki's death as a result of this was grief stricken and disgusted of wordly life, distributed all his wealth in charity and joined the Buddhist Saṅgha established in the Indra Vihāra of Puhār.[72]

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70. *Ibid*, Canto XXV, lines 207–11

“பரப்புநீர் பௌவம் பலர் தொழக்காப்போன்
உரைத்தன கேட்க வுறுகுவையாயின்
மன்னுயிர் முதல்வன் மணிமேகலா தெய்வம்
முன்னொடுந்தது ... ...”

71. See E.B. Cowell: *The Jātaka or Stories of the Buddha's former births*, Vol. IV, Story No. 442, pp. 9–11; also Ibid Vol. VI, pp. 21–23. More of the parallels between the epic and the Jātakas will be dealt with towards the end of this chapter.

72. *Silappadikāram*, Canto XXVII, lines 90–95

“கோவலன் தாதை கொடுந்துயரெய்தி
மாபெருந் தானமாவான் பொருளீத்தாங்
கிந்திர விகாரமேழுடன் புக்காங்
கந்தர சாரிகள் ஆறைம்பதின்மர்
பிறந்தயாக்கைப் பிறப்பற முயன்று
துறந்தோர் தன்முன்றுறவி யெய்தவும்”

Mānaikkan, father of Kaṇṇaki was also equally affected by this tragedy renounced wordly pleasures and became a follower of the Ājivika sect.[73] Mādhavi, the courtesan also was very distressed at these unhappy developments and ever since Kōvalan left her she was leading a pure and chaste life with her daughter Maṇimēkhalai. When she came to know of the tragic fate that had befallen her husband she also renounced life and joined the Buddhist Order of nuns[74] and adopted the robes of a bhikkuni under the advice and guidance of Aṛavaṇa Aḍigaḷ, the head of the Saṅgha of Puhār.[75] Maṇimēkhalai was still a young girl when these heart-rending incidents occurred and deeply impressed by the high code of conduct and morality practised by her mother, Maṇimēkhalai was not longing for mundane pleasures and like her mother she had also abiding faith in the Buddhist religion and at last became a Buddhist nun under the tutelage of the same saint.

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73. *Ibid*, Canto XXVII, lines 98–100

"கண்ணகி தாதைக்கடவுளர் கோலத்
தண்ண லம்பெருந்தவத்தா சீவகர்முன்
புண்ணியதானம் புரிந்தறங் கொள்ளவும்"

74. *Silappadikāram*, Canto XXVII lines 103–109 and Canto XXIX Verse 7, line 4

"மற்றது கேட்டு மாதவி மடந்தை
நற்றாய் தனக்கு நற்றிறம் படர்கேன்
மணிமேகலையை வான்றுயருறுக்கும்
கணிகையர் கோலங் காணா தொழிகெனக்
கோதைத்தாமங் குழலொடு களைந்து
போதித்தானம் புரிந்தறங் கொள்ளவும்"
"மாதவிதன் துறவுங் கேட்டாயோ தோழீ,
மணிமேகலை துறவுங் கேட்டாயோ தோழீ"

75. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XVIII, lines 7–8

"கோவலனிறந்த பின் கொடுந்துயரெய்தி
மாதவி மாதவர் பள்ளியுளடைந்து"

Ibid. Canto II, lines 59–69

The above survey has revealed to us a society where different religious sects flourished side by side with their own followers and sympathisers without the slightest hitch between one another. Different members of the same household belonged to different religions as we have seen in the case of Kōvalan and his family. The monarch also was a tolerant one and did not attempt to impose his own religion on his subjects, and it would be interesting to note that even in the royal family, the members adopted different religions without any prejudice to their relationship. Śenguṭṭuvan subscribed to the views of the orthodox religion of the land. The fact that he was born as a result of the grace of Śiva[76] that he worshipped Śiva and Vishṇu[77] before starting on his North Indian expedition, that he had a high regard for Brāhmaṇs and performed yāgas according to Vēdic rites[78] that he extended his support to all those "who

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76. *Śilappadikāram*, Canto XXVI, lines 98-99

"செஞ்சடைவானவன் அருளினில் விளங்க
வஞ்சித் தோன்றிய வானவகேளாய்"

77. *Ibid.* Canto XXVI, lines 60-67

"கடக்களியானைப் பிடர்த்த லையேறினன்
குடக்கோக்குட்டுவன் கொற்றங் கொள்கென
ஆடகமாடத் தறிதுயிலமர்ந்தோன்
சேடங்கொண்டு சிலர் நின்றேத்தத்
தெண்ணீர் காந்த செஞ்சடைக் கடவுள்
வண்ணச் சேவடி மணிமுடிவைத்தபின்
ஆங்கது வாங்கி அணிமணிப் புயந்து
தாங்கினனாகி........ "

78. *Ibid.* Canto XXVIII, lines 187-194

"மறையோன் மறை நாவுழுது வான் பொருள்
இறையோன் செவி செறுவாக வித்தலின்..............
மாடலமறையோன் சொல்லிய முறைமையின்
வேள்விச் சாந்தியின் விழாக்கொளவேவி"

upheld the Vēdas and lead a life keeping alight sacrificial fires,[79] all these strengthen the view that Śeṅguṭṭuvan's religion was Hinduism. But yet an important trait in his character is that he allowed all the religions to flourish. There was no sectarian spirit among the people and this could be accounted for only in two ways; As Prof. V.R.R. Dīkshitar observes: "Either the people did not look upon religious distinctions seriously, or there were no fundamental differences between one sect and another". But whatever it be, perfect peace prevailed in the religious field which incidentally helped the maintenance of social security and tranquility. To such a state of affairs Buddhism was also responsible. No doubt she was given an equal position in the land by the ruling monarchs as all the other religions were given, but this was not taken undue advantage of by the Buddhists and there is no evidence anywhere in the epic to show that Buddhism attempted to supersede the other religions nor do we hear of any instances of persecution or forcible conversion on her part. What the Buddhists, as the followers of other religions did, was that they placed their cards on the table and it was for the people to use their common sense and assess their merits and defects. It was for the people to carry the ideals preached by that religion to their mental laboratories, experiment with them, put them to the severest test and ultimately accept them and adopt them if they withstood all the tests. Thus the choice was entirely left in the hands of the people and nothing was imposed on them. This attitude of the Buddhists clearly shows that they did not abuse the high position accorded to them in the Tamil society by the ruling monarchs Differences amongst the various religions did exist but they were purely on questions of

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79. *Ibid.* Canto XXVI, lines 247-50

"மறக்கள முடித்த வாய்வாட் குட்டுவன்
வடதிசை மருங்கின் மறைகாத்தோம்பு
தடவுத்தீய வியாத்தல் பெருவாழ்க்கைச்
காற்றூதாளரைப் போற்றிக் காரினென"

high philosophy and doctrines about which the common man had nothing to do. Such religious debates were confined to the intelligentsia who alone possessed that spiritual and philosophic bent of mind to probe into deeper problems of religion. But even they regarded other religions as entitled to some respect so much so we don't hear of any religious bickerings in this age. From the account given above regarding the religious condition as depicted in the *Śilapp·dikāram*, we can easily perceive the prominent position occupied by Buddhism in the Tamil country. The very fact that the Chēra ruler's brother evinced so much interest in this religion is proof positive of the popularity of that religion in the Tamil country. That this religion was accorded a high status is again attested by other epic the *Maṇimēkhalai*, and more concrete and numerous evidence in favour of this position could be gathered from it for it is primarily a book on religion. However, one important incident described in the *Śilappadikāram* shows the high degree of popularity enjoyed by the that religion in the Tamil country, i.e. King Gajabāhu of Ceylon is said to have been one among the kings who visited the Chēra country at the time of the consecration of the temple to Pattinidēvi[80]. Gajabāhu is described in the Ceylonese chronicles as an enthusiastic Buddhist and Prof. P. T. Śrīnivāsa Aiyaṅgar says that "the whole tenor of the account of Gajabāhu's life would lead one to the conclusion that he was too enthusiastic a Bauddha to care for any other cult"[81]. The question is how could such an ardent Buddhist monarch attend the consecration ceremony at Vañji? Not only that he is said to have prayed the Goddess to manifest herself in his kingdom and that the boon was granted but also that he built a similar temple to the Chaste Goddess and arranged for her daily worship in his kingdom where the people were devout Buddhists. Why should Gajabāhu take such interest in the new Pattini cult and introduce it in his

80. Śiḷap. Canto. XXX, line 160–
"கடல் சூழிலங்கைக் கயவாகு வேந்தனும்"

81. Prof. P. T. Śrinivāśa Iyeṅgar: *History of the Tamils* p. 380

kingdom? Prof. P. T. S. Iyengar again expresses doubt as to whether this incident could have happened at all, for it looks so improbable.[82] But this view is not accepted by many and we may well go to the other extreme and say, as Dr. P. C. Alexander does [83], that the Pattini cult was originally a Buddhist cult and that was why Gajabāhu attended it. But this position too could not be taken as safe for we have no definite evidence to prove that the cult has its origin in Buddhism. But one noncontroversial conclusion may be safely drawn that the Chera king Śeṅguṭṭuvan would not have been hostile to Buddhism or its followers, and had he been so the Ceylonese rulers would not have certainly attended the function. Then to which religion did the Chaste Goddess belong? From the *Śilappadikāram* we are given to understand that Kaṇṇaki was a worshipper of Vishṇu and Jina[85]. But in the *Maṇimēkhalai* she appears to be a Buddhist and this is evident from her conversation with Maṇimēkhalai[86] who visited her temple at Vañji. Thus Śāttan makes her a Buddhist but Iḷaṅgō is non-committal. If we are to believe in what Śāttan says about her, Gajabāhu's visit on the occasion of the consecration ceremony seems to be reasonable.[87]

We shall now pass on to examine the other epic and what it has to say on the state of Buddhism in the Tamil country. We have already seen that the story contained in this epic is only a continuation of the story in the *Śilappadikāram*, and that these two are one and indivisible and without the one the other is incomplete. We have seen that the story of the *Śilappadikāram* stops with the apotheosis of Kaṇṇaki and the renunciation of Mādavi after

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82. *Ibid.* p. 380
83. Dr. P. C. Alexander: *Buddhism in Kēraḷa*, p. 35
85. *Śilappadikāram*, Canto X, lines 5–25
86. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXVI, lines 32–66
87. Dr. P. C. Alexander, *op. cit.* p. 37

hearing about Kōvalan's death. She had a child by Kōvalan, a girl of bewitching beauty. She had also joined the nunnery under the influence of her mother. She used to go to the flower gardens to gather flowers for service and she was so extra-ordinarily charming that the Chōḷa prince of Puhār set his heart upon her. The epic *Maṇimēkhalai* takes up the story from here and deals with the life history of Maṇimēkhalai to the stage of her early renunciation. From the flower garden Maṇimēkhalai was taken by the goddess Maṇimēkhala to the island of Maṇipallavam where she saw the miraculous Buddha seat and learnt all about her past life. She also secured there the never-exhausting begging bowl and returned to Kāvirippūm-paṭṭinam and dedicated herself to social service. She visited there the Buddhist sage Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ and was initiated by him into the teachings of the Buddha. The Chōḷa Prince, Udaya-kumaran coming to know of this continued to make love approaches to her and one day he was slain by a Vidhyādara, the form of whose wife Maṇimēkhalai had assumed. The King ordered her arrest and she was imprisoned, but thanks to the intervention of the queen, she was soon released. She then went to Sāvakam, now identified with Sumatra and with its ruler Āputra came again to Maṇipallavam. From there she went to Vañji, where she met the representatives of the different religious sects and learnt their philosophies. Finally she went to Kāñchi, met Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ there and from him she learnt some more intricate things in the teachings of the Buddha and settled there permanently, doing severe penance to attain *nirvāṇa*. It is this theme of the renunciation of Mādhavi's daughter by name Maṇimēkhalai that constitutes the subject matter of the epic *Maṇimēkhalai* which sets itself up to exalt Buddhism. In the treatment of this subject a large number of miraculous things are introduced and this character of the epic should be remembered when this work is taken for scrutiny for purposes of history. It must be remembered, however, that even more professedly sober works on Buddhism are no better in this

respect than this epic and the introduction of supernatural elements and miraculous occurrences are very common features of, and sometimes even essential to Buddhist history[88]

The author of the epic *Maṇimēkhalai* is Śāttanār, the 'grain merchant of Madura' (Maduraikkūlavāṇikan). He is one among the traditional 49 poets of the Third Śaṅgam and the authorship of a verse contribution in the collection called '*Tiruvaḷḷuvamālai*' is attributed to him. The reason why he was called Śittalai Śāttanār is explained like this: It was a custom in the Śaṅgam Age that every work before its publication should be brought before the Śaṅgam and receive its approval. It is natural that some of these works might contain some errors. Śāttanār who was an uncompromising critic used, it is said, to strike his head with his iron style every time he found mistakes in the works presented to the Śaṅgam so much so his head was full of sores and hence the epithet 'Śittalai' to his name. But this seems to be very improbable and a later invention, and a more probable explanation could be given. Śittalai may be the name of the village from which Śāttanār hailed.[89] But whatever it be, there is no doubt that he was a "master of logical subtleties and metaphysical cobwebs,"[90] as Mr. Kanakasabai has aptly remarked. This Śāttanār is said to be the friend of the Chēra ruler Śeṅguṭṭuvan and his ascetic brother Iḷaṅgō. That Śāttanār and Iḷaṅgō were contemporaries is clearly proved by reference to Śāttan not only in the prologue of the *Śilappadikāram*, but also

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88. '*Buddhistic Studies*' edited by B.C. Law. Dr. S.K. Iyeṅgar's Article entitled "The Buddhism of Maṇimēkhalai", p. 10

89. Prof. V.R.R. Dīkshitar: *Studies in Tamil literature and History*, p.80

90. Kanakasabai: *Tamils 1800 years ago*, p. 207

in the body of the work itself.[91] There is prima facie case for regarding the author of the *Maṇimēkhalai* as a Buddhist His elaborate treatment of Buddhist doctrines and Buddhist logic in the work shows that he was very well conversant with authoritative works on that religion. Many of the incidents described in his work seem to be taken from the Buddhist Jātaka stories where exactly similar incidents are narrated. This shows that the author was very familiar with the *Jātakas*. The purpose of the author in writing this peem is to demonstrate the superiority of Buddhism as a religion both as conducive to good conduct in this life and happiness in the life hereafter. This being his conscious purpose he makes use of every character appearing in the scene for serving this end.

Despite the fact that this is primarily a poetical piece, that its purpose is the exaltation of a religion and that the poet makes free use of his faculty of imagination in the introduction of supernatural elements, the work does contain much that may be considered as genuine historical material and the only difficulty lies in discriminating judiciously what is historical from that which is not historical throughout the work. Tamil tradition takes it that the story narrated in the poem has reference to incidents that actually took place. This need not be taken to mean that the incidents narrated in the poem took place in the manner that the poet has described them. It is open to the poets to weave a web of fancy and raise an ideal picture round the actual incident. This fact should not be lost sight of when we use the material contained in it for pusposes of history. Then the question arises whether the author is depieting a picture, the features of which existed in his own times or whether he depicts a picture with features, which he imagined, might

91. *Śilapp·dikāram*, Canto XXV, lines 64–66 and 100–106.

“மண்களி நெடுவேள் மன்னவற் கண்டு
கண்களி மயக்கத்துக் காதலோ டிருந்த
தண்டமி ழாசான் சாத்தனிஃ துரைக்கும்
துன்னிய துன்பந்துணிந்து வந்துரைத்த
நன்னூற் புலவர்க்கு ரன்கனமுரைத் தாங்கு”

have existed at the time of the occurrence of the incidents described. But there is no doubt that the two epics '*Silappadikāram* and *Maṇimēkhalai* treat of contemporary events so much so this questiou need not bother us much. Therefore whatever historical, geographical and other material that we may be able to extract from these poems, they must necessarily have reference to the times of the authors themselves.

The story begins with the Chōḷa capital Puhār and throughout, the same capital is mentioned; even where its destruction by the sea is referred to no other capital is mentioned. It is a generally accepted fact that Karikāla improved the capital of the Chōḷas and from the *Silappadikāram* we know that Karikāla was anterior to the story of the *Silappadikāram* and the *Maṇimēkhalai* but not long anterior. And the description of Puhār contained in this work *Maṇimēkhalai* reveals to us the high degree of prosperity enjoyed by that city and also agrees with the description given in the *Silappadikāram*, both of which are in perfect agreement with what is said about Puhār in an independent work of that period viz. the *Paṭṭinappālai*. The ruler of the Chōḷa country at that time was one who is variously called Kiḷḷivaḷavan[92] Neḍumuḍikkiḷḷi[93], Māvaṇkiḷḷi[94], Venvēṟkiḷḷi[95] and Vaḍivēṟkiḷḷi.[96] Hei

92. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXV lines 14–15.
"கிள்ளிவளவனொடு கெழுதகை வேண்டிக்
கள்ளவிழ் தாரோய் கலத்தொடும் போகி"

93. *Ibid* Canto XXIV, line 29
"கிளர் மணி நெடுமுடிக்கிள்ளி முன்னாள்
இளவேனில்இறுப்ப வீறும்பூது சான்ற"

94. *Ibid* Canto XIX, lines 126–127
"காரியாற்றுக் கொண்ட காவல் வெண்குடை
வலிகெழு தடக்கை மாவண் கிள்ளி"

95. *Ibid* Canto XXIX, lines 3–4
"வெல்வேற் கிள்ளிக்கு நாகநாடாள்வோன்
தன்மகள் பீலிவளை தான் பயந்த"

96. *Ibid*''Canto XXV, lines 192–193
"கெடுகல மாக்கள் புதல்வனைக் கெடுத்தது
வடிவேற்கிள்ளி மன்னனுக்குரைப்ப"

said to have married a lady named Sirti who is also called by the name Rāśamādēvi in the work.[97] She is said to have belonged to the family of the Mahābalis[98] and Mr. Veṅkayya of the Epigraphy department believes that the Bāṇās are the descendants of the Mahābalis and hence it may be taken that the Chōḷa king entered into matrimonial alliance with the family of the Bāṇas[99] From the *Maṇimēkhalai* we also know that the Chōḷa monarch Kiḷḷivaḷavan had a younger brother named Iḷamkiḷḷi who was ruling over Kāñchi at the time when Maṇimēkhalai arrived in the city.[100] From this we may infer that

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97. *Ibid* Canto XXI; lines 75–77.

"காவல நின்னையுங் காவல் செய்தாங்கிடு
மிடுசிறை நீக்கியிரா சமாதேவி
கூடவைக்குங் கோட் பினளாகி"

Canto XXIII, lines 6–7

"பட்டவை துடைக்கும் மயங்கெழு மொழியினள்
இலங்கரி நெடுங்கண் இராசமாதேவி'

Canto XXIV lines 75–76

"நன்மனம் பிறந்த நாடகக் கணிகையை
யென்மனைத் தருகென இராசமாதேவி"

98. *Ibid.* Canto XIX, lines 53–55

"நீரிற் பெய்த மூரிவார் சிலை
மாவலி மருமான் சீர்கெழுதிருமகள்
சீர்த்தி யென்னுந் திருத்தகுதேவியொடு"

99. Mahāmahōpādhyaya V. Swāminātha Iyer's *Maṇimēkhalai*, p. 207 footnote

100. *Maṇimēkhalai* Canto XXVIII, lines 170–72

"பொற்கொடி மூதூர்ப் புரிசை வலங்கொண்டு
நடுநகரெல்லை நண்ணினவிழிந்து
தொடுகழற்கிள்ளி துணையிளங் கிள்ளி
செம்பொன் மாச்சினைத் திருமணிப் பாசடை ...."

Kāñchī was still under the Chōḷa Viceroyalty and that time it was ruled by a Chōḷa prince. This Iḷaṁkiḷḷi is said to have won a victory for his brother Māvaṉkiḷḷi at the battle of Kāriyāṟu. He carried from the field of battle as spoils of war, the state umbrellas of the enemies which he duly presented to his brother.[101]

In the latter half of the story of Maṇimēkhalai and towards the closing years of the reign of the then Chōḷa king Kiḷḷivaḷavan, Puhār is said to have been washed away by the sea as a result of which many people were forced to evacuate the city

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101. *Maṇimēkhalai* Canto XIX, lines 120–28

"வஞ்சியினிருந்து வஞ்சிசூடி
முறஞ் செவியானையுந் தேருமாவு
மறங்கெழு நெடுவாள் வயவருமிடைந்த
தலைத்தார்ச் சேனையொடு மலைத்துத் தலைவந்தோர்
சிலைக்கயலொடுங் கொடி செருவேற்றடக்கை
யார்புனைதெரிய இளங்கோன் தன்னால்
காரியாற்றுக் கொண்ட காவல்வெண்குடை"

The reference in the *Maṇimēkhalai* makes it clear that the enemies against whom the Chōḷa prince had to fight were the Pāṇḍyas and the Chēras combined. This battle was fought sometime anterior to the advent of Maṇimēkhalai in Kāñchī, perhaps in the reign of Śeṅguṭṭuvan or still earlier. It is likely that this battle took place in Śeṅguṭṭuvan's reign. The fact that the immediate predecessor of Śeṅguṭṭuvan had attached Koṅgu to the Chēra territories and that the Kollimalai territories were also added to the Chēra kingdom with the help of Malayamāṉ Kāri of Tirukkōilūr prove beyond doubt that the Chēras were following a policy of territorial aggrandisement till at last they came into conflict with the Chōḷa rulers, and in an aggressive war of the Chēras it is quite common that the Pāṇḍyas joined hands and it would be interesting to note that this was a normal feature of the political relations between the three Tamil kings, that whenever anyone of the three got the dominant position,

and settle temporarily and in some cases permanently in some other places. Consequently the capital, Puhār became desolate and its importance diminished to a great extent. So far is known from the *Maṇimēkhalai*.[102] The *Śirupāṇārruppaḍai* which may be assigned to a period a generation later than this work, when mentioning the three Tamil kingdoms and their capitals mentions Uṟandai as the Chōḷa capital and not Puhār, which seems to be a confirmation of what the *Maṇimēkhalai* says. Perhaps the Chōḷas themselves transferred their capital to Uṟaiyūr after the destruction of Puhār. The Ceylon tradition also, when narrating the story of Gajabāhu's visit to India mentions Uṟaiyūr as the capital of the Chōḷas. In the body of the work when the author discusses the reasons for the destruction of Puhār or at least a part of it we are given the information that seems to be actually a refernce to the birth of Toṇḍamān Iḷam Tirayan who became a very prominent figure as ruler of Kāñchi in a later period of the Śaṅgam Age. The story contained in the epic runs thus: The Chōḷa ruler, Kiḷḷivaḷavan, one day when he was spending his time in the royal gardens, met a very beautiful girl and fell in love with her. At his request, she stayed with him for sometime as his wife and one day she suddenly disappeared and the Chōḷa king was informed by a Bauddha ascetic that she was Pīlivaḷai, the daughter of the Nāgā King Valaivāṇan and that she would return no more but would only send her son.[103] When she had become

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the other two were certainly opposed to him and formed a combination against him. (Dr. S. K. Iyengar: *Maṇimēkhalai in its historical setting*, p 43)

102. *Maṇimekhalai*, Canto XXV, lines 176–201.

“மடவரணல்லாய் நின்றன் மாநகர்
கடல்வயிறு புக்கது காரணங் கேளாய்
நாகநன்ஞுடாள்வேரன் தன்மகள்......
....
கடவுண் மாநக்ர் கடல்கொளப் பெயர்ந்து”

103. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXIV, lines 29–61.

mother of a son she sent the baby from Maṇipallavam through a sea-going merchant, Kambaḷa Chetty whose ship touched the island on its way. Before he could reach the shore his ship was caught in a wreck and in the resulting confusion he missed the child that was entrusted to him to be taken to the Chōḷa ruler of Puhār. The merchant therefore took it that the child had died in the accident and reported the matter to the king. The king was upset at this news and ordered his men to search for the child. In his pre-occupation with the searching for the child he forgot to celebrate the annual Indra festival and on account of this remisness the Goddess Maṇimēkhala the guardian deity of the sea brought about the destruction of the city of Puhār. So much of the story is referred to in the *Maṇimēkhalai*.[104] This account agrees with the details given of the birth of Toṇḍamān Iḷam Tirayan in other Saṅgam works and it is generally taken to refer to the birth of that chief. The child was, obviously, alive and was later on brought to the Chōḷa king. Recognising by the mark, previously agreed upon, which was a sprig of the creeper Toṇḍai tied to the ankle of the baby, the king brought him up as a prince and in course of time he grew up to be a ruler of Kāñchi. But this identification is based upon mere probabilities, as the details narrated in this epic and in the other Saṅgam works are in agreement with each other, it is probable that they refer to the same incident.

So far as the Pāṇḍya country is concerned, the work mentions Madura as the capital of the Pāṇḍya kingdom, and referred to as Dakshiṇa Madura[105] and the ruler at

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104. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXV, lines 175–203

105. *Ibid.* Canto XIII, lines 104–105, XXII, 105–106

"மிக்க செல்வத்து விளங்கியோர் வாழுந்
தக்கணமதுரை தான் சென்றெய்தி"

"மிக்கோருமையும் விழுப்பெருஞ் செல்வத்துத்
தக்கணமதுரை தான் சென்றடைந்தபின்"

that time is said to be Śeliyan of the beautiful car'. He is the successor of the Pāṇḍyan Neḍuñcheliyan who gave up his life as a result of his unjust act of punishing innocent Kōvalan. The alternative capital of the Pāṇḍyas Korkai is also mentioned in the work[105a]. Besides these there is not much said about Madura or its ruler. The other epic *S'ilappadıkāram* deals more elaborately with Madura than this epic. Then coming to the third capital of the Tamil country viz. Vañji, we get more information about it than about Madura. The Chēra country is referred to as under the rule of Śenguṭṭuvan at that time, and his extensive dominions and his invasion of North India are also mentioned[106]. There is also an elaborate description of Kāñchī where Maṇimēkhalai spent the last days of her life It is said that at the time of her arrival to that city, the city was suffering from a very severe famine and she was actually directed by Māśāttuvān, father of Kōvalan, to go to Kāñchī for the purpose of mitigating the evil effects of the famine.[107] It is in this connection that Ilamkilli is mentioned as the ruler of Kāñchī. He caused a number of buildings to be built all sacred to the memor of the Buddha. Among such buildings mention is made of a stūpa in the south-west direction of the city near a big garden. [108] We have seen already that the erecting

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105-a *Ibid* Canto XIII lines 84-85

"தெற்கட் குமரியாடிய வருவோன்
பொற்றேர்ச் செழியன் கொற்கையம்பேரூர்"

1 6. *Maṇi nēkhalai*, Canto XXVI, lines 77-90

107. *Ibid* Canto XXVIII, lines 155-61

"பொன்னெயிற் காஞ்சி நாடுகவினழிந்து
மன்னுயிர்மடிய மழைவளங் கரத்தலின்
அந்நகர் மாதவர்க் கையமி டுவோர்
இன்மையினிந்நக ரெய்தினர் காணு
யாருயிர் மருந்தேயந்நாட்ட கவயிற்
காரெனத்தோன்றிக் காத்தனின் கடனென"

108. *Ibid* Canto XXVIII, lines 170-76.

of many stūpas and topes in Kāñchī are ascribed to Aśōka by Hiuen Tsang and it is interesting to note that the Chinese traveller mentions a tope and along with it a stūpa located in the south direction of the city and this is in perfect agreement with what is said in the *Maṇimēkhalai*. There is no probability at all of Aśōka having built a stūpa or tope in the extreme south of India and except Hiueñ Tsang's account there is no other evidence to support this. Therefore in all probability it seems "that when Kāñchī was a flourishing Buddhist centre during the age of the Chōḷa king, Kiḷḷivaḷavan, his brother a votary of that religion caused a stūpa to be built in the midst of a great tope and a comparison of the two descriptions of the *Maṇimēkhalai* and the records of the Chinese Traveller demonstrates that the tope which Hiuen Tsang saw at Kāñchī was the same attributed to Iḷamkiḷḷi. It may be that by the time of the visit of the Chinese traveller a new tradition has grown round the stūpa and this tope and the stūpa of Iḷamkiḷḷi were also attributed to the Mauryan Emperor."[109] It was this Iḷamkiḷḷi that received Maṇimēkhalai at Kāñchī and gave her accommodation in a grove called Dharmadavana Later he also built for her a new vihāra with a chaitya and provided her with all the necessary amenities. It wa. in this chaitya, where she kept the footprints of the Buddha, that she learnt from Aṛavaṇa aḍigaḷ the teachings of the Buddha. She spent the rest of her life in that city.

The island of Śāvakam, which is identified with the present Sumatra is also mentioned in the epic. The ruler of the island then was one Puṇyarāja, also called Āputra. It is said that Maṇimēkhalai took the king to the island of Maṇipallavam and taught him the greatness of the creed of the Buddha.[110] The capital of this island Śāvakam is said to be Nāgapuram. If this

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109. B. C. Law: '*Buddhistic Studies*' – V. R. R. Dīkshitar's Article entitled "Buddhism in Tamil literature" p.688.

110. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXV.

Śivakam is identified with Sumatra, we have another source of evidence viz. the Chinese travellers Fa-hien and I-Tsing visited that island in A. D. 400 and 671 or 672 A. D. respectively. Fa-Hien did not notice much of Buddhism there whereas I-Tsing says that Buddhism was in a flourishing condition. From this the inference may be drawn that the account given by Fa-hien does not represent correctly the prevailing state of affairs in that island. Perhaps that part of the island which he visited was not Buddhistic. It may also be said that Buddhism, which was once very popular in that island i.e. at the time of Āputra in the early centuries of the Christian era was in the decline when Fa-hien visited the island in 400 A. D. and that during the time of I-Tsing's visit i. e. in 671 or 672 A. D. it regained its popularity. From this it may be argued that *Maṇimēkhalai* belonged to the 5th or 6th century A. D. But this is not convincing for all circumstantial evidence is against fixing such a late date for this epic.[111] This in short is the political condition as depicted in the epic.

In the course of the story is mentioned also the island of Maṇipallavam [112] said to be thirty yōjanas south of Puhār. The Goddess Maṇimēkhalai appears before Maṇimēkhalai when she is inside the crystal pavilion and takes her to the island of Maṇipallavam wherefrom she returns to Puhār after seven days

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111. B. C. Law: '*Buddhistic Studies*' - Prof. V. R. R. Dikshitar's Article entitled 'Buddhism in Tamil Literature', p.687

112 Maṇipallavam is now identified with a portion of the present Jaffna called 'Kāraittīvu' and the Akitta Jātaka mentions an isle called 'Kāra' and that Jātaka account provides adequate ground to identify Maṇipallavam with the present isle of Kārai in Jaffna. There is also proof to show that this isle was considered to be a sacred place to the Buddhists and that Puhār from time immemorial had some connection with Maṇipallavam.

after learning all that took place in her own and Śutamati's previous existence on earth. It is with the help of the miraculous seat of the Buddha that she learns about her past life. The seat had been placed there by Indra and tradition says that Buddha himself once visited that island and delivered a sermon sitting on it. This happened on the occasion when two neighbouring Nāga chiefs related to each other. fought for the possession of that seat. As the war proved destructive Buddha appeared before them and pacified the combatants by preaching the sermon.[113] We again see Maṇimēkhalai going to the island of Maṇipallavam after exhorting Āputra of Śāvakanāḍu to visit the island to know about his previous birth. She circumambulates the Buddha seat and through the guardian deity of that island she comes to know why that seat should let those who worship it know about their previous births.[114] In response to Maṇimēkhalai's advice, King Āputra also visits the island whom Maṇimēkhalai takes round and shows the Buddha seat. Āputra also knows about his previous birth.[115] It was again from the tank called Gōmuki which is situated in the south-east portion of the island that Maṇimēkhalai got the *amuda śurabhi*, the miraculous alms bowl, the story of which was narrated to her by Tīvatilakai.[116]

Now we shall pay a little attention to the supernatural elements introduced in the story. At the outset it may be pointed out that the author has been very careful to introduce supernatural

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113. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto VIII lines 49–63. Under the orders of Indra this seat was kept guard over by Tīva Tilakai. Thus Maṇipallavam became a very great holy centre for the Buddhists and Buddhists from various parts came there to offer worship to the seat.

114. *Ibid.* Canto XXV, lines 54–65

115 *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXV, lines 120–138

116 *Ibid*, Canto XI, lines 37–58.

elements only where they are considered appropriate in accordance with the accepted traditions of India, perhaps the more peculiar Buddhist thought. Some examples from the work may be cited here; The Goddess Maṇimēkhalai undoubtedly shows supernatural features of character. Maṇimēkhalai herself attains a certain stage when she is also seen to have acquired the extraordinary powers of being able to fly in the air, to be independent of hunger and to be unaffected by physical pain. Vidhyādaras are also introduced who also possess supernatural powers. Besides these we have the speaking statue, the never exhausting alms bowl, a supernatural Buddha seat etc. Maṇimēkhalai and Āputra are no doubt human characters but yet they are associated with supernatural powers, for according to the Buddhists it was believed that anybody could acquire these powers if they attained to that requisite degree of spiritual merit. Maṇimēkhalai and Āputra have reached that level and so they are in possession of such powers and this fact should not be missed in any critical judgment. It is significant to note that the poet has never introduced this supernatural element in human characters proper He clearly distinguishes between the super-human elements and purely human elements. It is only when he treats of a super-human character that he invests the person with supernatural powers and does not confound between the two types. A good example of this may be taken from the work itself. When Maṇimēkhalai returns to the island of Maṇipallavam with the king Āputra from his kingdom, she, as usual, flies in the air whereas Āputra orders for a fleet to sail to Maṇipallavam. It is here that we see how carefully the author has introduced the supernatural elements. The super-human elements have not been carried to an extent of incredibility and what the author has said is possible and acceptable to the Buddhists. Notwithstanding the introduction of the supernatural, the work does contain some historical material.

In the course of the story we see Maṇimēkhalai as a Buddhist novitiate in Puhār, then we see her in Buddhist

surroundings in the island of Maṇipallavam. She is again brought to Vañji and then to Kāñchī. Being a Buddhist she is placed in all these situations amidst Buddhist surroundings. Buddhist vihāras, monuments and saints are brought before us and it is these that give occasion for various details connected with Buddhism. Therefore a full examination of these details would certainly be useful.

We see in the very first canto a description of Puhār where "it was not merely a question of confusion of languages but even confusion of religions." We see in that city temples of Hindu gods, Buddhist vihāras and residences for Jaina ascetics-all existing side by side. Votaries of different religions lived together and taught their respective systems unmolested by the other sects. The existence of seven Indra vihāras at Puhār is conspicuously mentioned and when describing Vañji, the Chēra capital, the Buddhist vihāras there are compared to the Indra Vihāra of Puhār.[117] In Puhār there is a garden outside the city with overflowering trees, sacred to the memory of the Buddha. It contains in it a pavilion made of crystal in which is placed a lotus seat of miraculous powers with the foot prints of the Buddha. We also know that Bauddha Cāraṇas and Upāśakas used to come there for worshipping the holy feet of the Buddha.[118] In the intial stages Maṇimēkhalai found enough to learn about Buddhism at Puhār and Aṟavaṇa Aḍigaḷ, the celebrated Buddhist

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117. *Maṇimēkhalai* Canto XXVIII, lines 69–72: Canto XXVI line 55.

'அந்தர சாரிகள் அமர்ந்தினிதுறையும்
இந்திர விகாரமென எழில்பெற்று"
"ஐந்தொடி தந்தையுடனே பகவன்
இந்திர விகாரமேழு மேத்துதலின்"

The *Śilappadikāram* also mentions this Vide. *Śilap.* Cantos X, lines 13–14 and XXVII, lines 92–93.

118. *Maṇimēkhalai* Cantos III, lines 59–66; V, 95–105: VI, 11–12.

teacher had made it his original residence.[119] Mādhavi also became a Buddhist nun at that place and so also Māśāttuvan Kōvalan's father. Consequent on the destruction of Puhār by the erosion of the sea, Aṟavaṇa Aḍigaḷ and Mādhavi had to abandon that place and settle in Vañji[120] for some time and later at Kāñchī. This shows that the religious teachers were at liberty to teach what they believed in the different capitals of the Tamil country. The fact that Puhār enjoyed the honour of being the seat and centre of a reputed sage like Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ is strong evidence to show the high degree of popularity enjoyed by that religion in that region. Puhār has now become a submerged and forgotten city and its diminutive representative today does not contain even the slightest vestiges of its having been a prosperous capital of the Chōḷas and also a great emporium of trade and a flourishing centre of Buddhism. It awaits the spade of the archaeologist and work in this direction is sure to bring to light a number of facts which would largely contribute to the enrichment of the knowledge of Buddhism in the Tamil country.[120a]

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119. *Maṇimēkhalai* Canto XII, lines 1–4.

"ஆங்கவர் தம்முடன் அறவண அடிகள்
யாங்குள ரென்றே யிளங் கொடி வினாஅய்
நரை முதிர்யாக்கை நடுங்கா நாவின்
உரை மூதாளன் உறைவிடங் குறுகி"

120. *Ibid,* Canto XXVIII lines 80–82

"மனங்கவல் கெடுத்தது மாநகர் கடல்கொள
அறவண அடிகளும் தாயரும் ஆங்குவிட்டு
இறவா இப்பதிப் புகுந்தது கேட்டும்"

120a The excavations conducted by the Archaeological Survey of India since 1962 at Kāveripūmpattinam (Puhār) have brought to light vestiges of ancient habitations, besides square copper coins of the Chōlas, rouletted pottery of both grey and black variety, several beautiful terracota figurines, Roman coins etc. Perhaps the most significant discoveries

Likewise Vañji, the capital of the Charas is also depicted as a famous centre of Buddhism. Not only that various other religious sects, heretical from the point of view of the author, are said to have existed side by side with Buddhism. This could be inferred from the fact that Maṇimēkhalai came to Vañji to learn the different systems of religion. But before actually doing so, she visited the temple erected in honour of her chaste mother Kaṇṇaki. Then she was informed by the Chaste Goddess that the calamity that attended on herself and her husband was but the working out of the karma and narrated the story to illustrate this.[121] Two kings of the Kaliṅga kingdom once fell to fighting against each other in sheer hatred as a result of which the whole country was in a state of utter confusion. Then a merchant Śaṅgama by name came there with his wife to make money by selling jewels and other articles. He was suspected to be a spy by a police official of the state and was taken before the king who ordered his execution. Hearing this tragic news his wife put an end to her life in utter grief and

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are a brick-built wharf at Kiḻaiyūr, a water reservoir at Vāṇagiri and a Buddhist monastery at Mēlaiyūr all the three places parts of the city of Kāveripūmpattinam. An entire wing of a Vihāra, consisting of seven rooms each about eight feet square was used for residence of the Buddhist monks. A fine copper image of the Buddha in dhyana pose was found in one of the rooms. A large lime stone slab bearing the sacred feet of the Buddha and other auspicious symbols like the Pūrnaghata, Swastika found at the place is strikingly similar to such objects found at the famous Buddhist centres of Andhra-Amarāvathi and Nāgārjunikonda.

Dr. K. V. Raman's article "Excavations in Pūmpuhar" in "கைகேயடு" (Hand book) published in 1968 in connection with the Second World Tamil Conference, Madras. Pages 238-40

121. Maṇimēkhalai, Canto XXVI lines 10-34.

it is the curse that she invoked at the moment of her death that resulted in the mishap to Kōvalan who was in the previous birth responsible for the unfortunate death of Saṅgama. After knowing this and after assuming the form of an old hermit at the advice of the Chaste Goddess Maṇimēkhalai set about on her mission of learning the different systems of religious thought. It is in this context that we get information about the sects that were flourishing in the Chēra capital like the Vaidika, the Jaina, the Sāṅkhya, the Vaiśēshika and the Bhūtavāda.[122] She then went in search of Aṟavaṇa Aḍigaḷ and her mother and it is at this stage that we get a graphic description of the Chēra capital, its forts, its streets, the different classes of citizens living in these streets.[123] In the course of the description is mentioned a Vihāra of the Bauddhas which is said to be as beautiful as the Indra vihāra of Kāvirippūmpaṭṭinam.[124]

She meets here her grandfather Māśāttuvān, father of Kōvalan and recounts to him the whole story of all that had happened to her till then.[125] Māśāttuvān in turn explains to her the circumstances that led to his visit there and also narrates the history of the Buddhist vihāra at Vañji.[126] He explains to her that on hearing of the misfortune that befell his son and daughter-in-law he renounced his life and was living in Puhār as an Upāśaka and that he came to Vañji with a view to worship the chaitya erected by his own ancestor, Kōvalan's

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122. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXVII

123. *Ibid* Canto XXVIII lines 1 to 67

124. *Ibid* Canto XXVIII, lines 69–71
"அந்தர சாரிகள் அமர்ந்தினிதுறையும்
இந்திர விகாரமென எழில் பெற்று
நவையறு நாதனல்லறம் பகர்வோன்
உறையும் பள்ளிபுக்கு"

125. *Ibid* Canto XXVIII, lines 74–91

126. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXVIII, lines 93–136

forefather in the ninth generation. The latter being an intimate friend of the then ruling Chēra monarch built this chaitya of "brilliant white stucco with its turrets reaching to the skies". He continues that fortunately he himself was present there on the occasion when the Chēra ruler Śeṅguṭṭuvan was entertaining the 'Dharmachāraṇas' who after worshipping the hill called 'Samanoḷi' in the island of Laṅka decided to get down to earth as the time for setting the king on the good path had come and adds that he had the good fortune of listening to their discourse on the Buddhist doctrines. It is difficult to identify the Chēra monarch mentioned here. He is described as the contemporary of the ninth ancestor of Kōvalan which means that he must naturally be the ninth ancestor of Śeṅguṭṭuvan also. With the very limited data at our disposal about the ancestors of Śeṅguṭṭuvan it is not possible to identify this particular Chēra king.[127] This passage has been somewhat misunderstood and Śeṅguṭṭuvan is even made the contemporary of the ninth ancestor of Kovalan. It is clear from the text that Kōvalan's father first narrates the story of his timely arrival at Vañji when Śeṅguṭṭuvan was worshipping the Buddhist Holy Ones and congratulates himself on his good fortune in having had the opportunity of listening to their teachings.[128] Then he proceeds to narrate that the purpose of his visit to that place was to worship the chaitya built there by one of his own

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127. The *Padirrupattu* gives the following list of Chēra kings.

(i) Imayavaramban Neḍuñchēralātan.
(ii) Palyānai-Sel-keḻu Kuṭṭuvan
(iii) Kaḷaṅkāikkaṇṇi Nārmuḍichēral
(iv) Kaḍal Pirakōṭṭiya Śeṅkuṭṭuvan.
(v) Āḍukōṭ pāṭṭu Chēralātan.
(vi) Selvakkaḍuṅkō Vāḻiyātan.
(vii) Perumchēral Irumpoṟai.
(viii) Iḷamchēral Irumpoṟai.

128. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXVIII, lines 100-122

ancestors.[129] The two incidents are thrown together one after the other and apt to be misunderstood at a casual reading and the passage referred to here undoubtedly makes Śeṅguṭṭuvan the contemporary of the events described in this epic and the Śilappadikāram, also confirms this in more than one place and hence we need not be misled by the passage here as to the date of these epics. One thing emerges clearly from this viz., we may reasonably assume that the Chēra ruler, who was the friend of the ninth ancestor of Kōvalan, became very much interested in the new religion for we know that he received the Buddhist divines with great respect and listened to their teachings with great interest. He is also said to have given permission to his friend Kōvalan (the ancestor of the Kōvalan of the epic) for building a Buddhist chaitya in his capital. But there is no direct evidence of his having embraced the new faith. All these things clearly reveal to us the abiding interest of the Chēra monarchs in this religion and their tolerant attitude towards it.[130] The Buddhist chaitya mentioned here must be a very big one for it is described as one with its "turrets reaching to the skies."[131]
It seems to have been a very reputed one and Buddhist mendicants belonging to the different parts of the Tamil country used to meet there. Kōvalan's father himself says that "it was erected in order that those live in this world might visit it and destroy the evil attaching to them."[132] Again he says that the holy mendicants of Kāñchī abandoned that city and settled down in this Vihāra since in Kāñchī there were none to

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129. *Ibid*, Canto XXVIII, lines 123–33

130. Dr. P. C. Alexander: *Buddhism in Kēraḷa*, p. 40.

131. *Maṇimēkhalai*. Canto XXVIII, line 131.
வானோங்கு சிமையத்து வாலொளிச் சயித்தம்"

132. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXVIII, line 132
"ஈனோர்க் கெல்லாம் இடர்கெட வியன்றது"

give alms to them as a result of a severe famine there.[133] From these it is obvious that the Vihāra at Vañji was very famous and popular. It is unfortunate that we don't have any relics now in that city to get an idea of what it was like. There are some neglected sites in and near Cranganore claiming to have once accomodated this famous Bauddha chaitya.[134]

In Buddhist and Jain traditions Kāñchī occupies a prominent place as an important centre of Buddhism. It is here that the Jain teacher Akaḷaṅka held a disputation and destroyed Buddhist heresy. The city is said to have suffered from a severe famine when Maṇimēkhalai arrived there.[135] Māśāttuvān, father of Kōvalan, when he met Maṇimēkhalai at Vañji told her that Kāñchī was suffering from a severe famine owing to failure of rain and asked her to go there with her miraculous alms-bowl to give relief to the people. Accordingly she went to that city and fed the famine-stricken people with the help of the 'amuda śurabhi' the never-exhausting alms bowl.[136] In this connection we also know that in Kāñchī there was a Bauddha chaitya constructed by the then ruling Viceroy Iḷamkiḷḷi in which was kept the Bōdhi tree, the stem and branches of which were made of gold and the leaves made of emerald.[137] Kāñchi

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133. *Ibid* Canto XXVIII lines 156–59
"பொன்னெயிற் காஞ்சி நாடுகவி னழிந்து
மன்னுயிர் முடிய மழைவளங் கரத்தலின்
நன்னகர் மாதவர்க்கு ஐய மிடுவோர்
யின்மையின் இந்நகர் எய்தினர் காணாய்"
134. Dr. P. C. Alexander: *Buddhism in Kērala*, p. 41
135. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXVIII, lines 156–57
136. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXVIII, lines 216–34
137. *Ibid.* Canto XXVIII, lines 172–75
"தொடுகழற் கிள்ளி துணையிளங்கிள்ளி
செம்பொன் மாச்சினைத் திருமணிப் பாசடைப்
பைம்பூம் போதிப் பகவற்கியற்றிய
சேதியந் தொழுது ...."

is very important in the history of Buddhism in the Tamil country for at the time of the *Maṇimēkhalai* it happened to be the residence of the great Buddhist divine, Aṟavaṇa Aḍigaḷ, the highest authority in the Tamil land on the orthodox teaching of the Buddha. Not satisfied with the teachings of the various other religions and the ultimate truth expounded by each, Maṇimēkhalai comes to Kāñchi and places herself at the feet of Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ and learns in all detail the orthodox teachings of the Buddha and she is at last convinced of the truth contained in the system of logic propounded by Aṟavaṇa Aḍigaḷ and his school of Buddhism and ultimately embraces that religion. Sbe obviously remained there for the rest of her life as the same is referred to in a prophecy made in regard to her future in the course of the story. [138] So far about Kāñchi from what the *Maṇimēkhalai* has got to say and we shall refer again to Kāñchi and the history of Buddhism there in subsequent chapters.

As we have already stated, the aim of the author who may be reckoned as a Buddhist, is to exalt his religion and to make use of the characters in the work as a means to this end. There are a number of contexts in which the author takes occasion to enforce various aspects of the teachings of the Buddha and sometimes they are treated very elaborately. Throughout the work the Buddha is called by various names with various attributes like "தனக்கெனவாழாப் பிறர்க்குரியாளன்" (Canto V–73), "அறக்கதிராழி திறம்படவுருட்டிக் காமற் கடந்தவாமன்" (Canto V 76–77) ஆதி முதல்வன்றன் வாழியான்வேரன் ... ..." (Canto VI–11) "பிறவிப் பிணி மருத்துவன் ... ..." (Canto IX-61), "மைத்திருள் கூர்ந்த மன மாசுதீரப் புத்த ஞாயிறு தோன்றுங் காலை" (Canto XII–85–86), "செம்பொன் மாச்சினைத் திருமணிப் பாசடைப் பைம்பூம்போதிப் பகவன்" (Canto XXVIII–172–174), "போதி மூலம் பொருந்தியிருந்து மாரனை வென்று வீரனாகிக், குற்ற மூன்று முற்றவறுக்கும் வாமன்" (Canto XXX 10–13). Buddhist traditions of North India say that a number

138. *Ibid.* Canto XXI, lines 161–74

of miracles were noticed at the time of the birth of the Buddha all pointing to his future greatness. This tradition has been remarkably pictured by the author of the epic in Canto XII, lines 85–98, where Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ says that when Buddha appears "the moon and the sun will shine without interruption, asterisms that mark the day will move in their orbits without stopping, rains will never fail, earth with yield abundance" etc Again Buddhist works proclaim that the fundamentals on which the Buddha's teachings rested were prevalent even in days anterior to the Buddha and that there were twenty four Buddhas of whom Gautama Buddha was the 24th. This is attested to by *Maṇimēkhalai* also in Canto XXX[139]. The Buddhists believe that all living beings are made up of a combination of five śkandas and this is also mentioned in Canto XXX.[140] Canto XXX of the work is completely saturated with Buddhist doctrines. The chapter starts with stating that practice of *dāna* or gifts and śīla or good conduct is a pre-requisite to every one for entering into the Saṅgha. Maṇimēkhalai having taken upon herself these duties, as all Buddhists do, worships three times the triple jewel of the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṅgha.[141] The four truths of Buddhism, viz. suffering the cause of suffering, removal of suffering and the way to remove suffering are mentioned in Canto XXX.[142] In the same canto again the author makes a

139. இறந்த காலத்தெண்ணில் புத்தர்களுஞ்
சிறந்தருள் கூர்ந்து திருவாய் மொழிந்த" (lines 14–15)

140. "உருவு நுகர்ச்சி குறிப்பே பாவனை
யுள்ளவறி வினையைங் கந்தமாவன" (189–90)

141. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXX lines 1–4
"தானந்தாங்கிச் சீலந்தலை நின்று
போன பிறப்பிற் புகுந்ததை யுணர்ந்தோன்
புத்த தன்ம சங்கமென்று
முத்திறமணியை மும்மையின் வணங்கி"

142. *Ibid* Canto XXX lines 186–88
"துன்பந் தோற்றம் பற்றே காரணம்
மின்பம் வீடே பற்றிவி காரண
மொன்றிய வுரையே வாய்மை நான்காவது"

detailed examination of the twelve nidānas and their nature. The realization of the Four Truths could be achieved only by overcoming the chain of causes and effects incorporated in the Twelve nidānas. These twelve nidānas "appear one from the other in order as cause and effect and being capable of reappearance, as consequent upon that which is before it, assume the form of a never-ending circle. When in this order of cause and consequence the first ceases to exist, the next follows in cessation: when it comes into existence, that which follows it does so inevitably. So these are properly described as a chain of causes and conditions." The twelve causes and conditions called the twelve nidānas are:[143]

(i) Pēdamai (Ignorance)
(ii) Ṡeykai (Action)
(iii) Uṇarvu (consciousness)
(iv) Aruuru (Name and form)
(v) Vāyil (six organs of sense)
(vi) Ūṟu (contact)
(vii) Nuharvu (sensation)
(viii) Vēṭkai (craving)
(ix) Paṟṟu (attachment)
(x) Pavam (Becoming or existence)
(xi) Tōṟṟam (birth)
(xii) Vinaippayan (the result of action)

Then the author goes on to describe what the different nidānas mean individually and the exposition seems actually to follow closely that of the Sarvāstivādins and Sautrāntikas.[144]

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143. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXX lines 45-48
"பேதைமை செய்கை யுணர்வே யருவுரு
வாயிலூறே நுகர்வே வேட்கை
பற்றே பவமே தோற்றம் வினைப்பய
னிற்றென வகுத்த வியல்பீராறும்"

144. Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar: *Maṇimēkhalai in its historical setting*, p. 81

Ignorance is the root cause of all evil and as a result of not perceiving the truth one is caught in a never-ending cycle of births. Births are said to be in the six different worlds of beings of which the first three are Dēva, Brahma and human respectively, the next three being animal life, the spirit world and the nether world. Good deeds take one to births in the first three and evil deeds to that in the following three [145] Then the author proceeds to describe the working of this twelve-fold chain of causes and effects. From ignorance arises action, from action springs consciousness, from consciousness comes ideas of name and form, from name and form spring the organs of sense, through organs of sense contact becomes possible, contact results in sensation, sensation produces desire, from desire springs attachment, from attachment comes into existence collection of deeds, as a result of this collective deed arise other various forms of birth, birth inevitably brings along with it age, disease and death and the consequent anxiety and feeling of incapacity to get rid of it. This never-ending suffering is the ultimate result.[146] In such a never ending circle of experience, when ignorance ceases, action will cease; with action consciousness will cease, with consciousness name and form will cease, with name and form organs of sense will cease, with the cessation of organs of sense contact will cease, with contact sensation will cease, with sensation desire will cease, desire ceasing to exist there will be no attachment, without attachment there is no accumulation of deeds, without accumulation of deeds there will be no becoming, with the cessation of becoming there will be no birth, no disease, no age, no death and in consequence no anxiety and no helplessness. Thus this never-ending series of suffering will be destroyed.[147] Then the author proceeds to make a classification

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145. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXX lines 51–60

146. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto lines 104– XXX,117

147. *Ibid*, Canto XXX, lines 119–133

of these nidānas.[148] The twelve nidānas are classified into four sections with three joints as in the karma phenomenon propounded by the Sarvāstivādins. Desire, attachment and ignorance and the resulting birth constitute action in the present and cause future birth. Consciousness, name and form, organs of sense, contact, sensation, birth, age, disease and death are consequential experiences in life both present and future. These are full of evil, of deeds and of consequences resulting from these deeds and thus constitute suffering. As such these are regarded as impermanent, the cardinal doctrine of Buddhism.[149] The result from this suffering is said to be the realization that there is nothing like a soul in anything existing [150] and this realization is the nature of release or Viḍu. The best attitude of mind is in the realisation of friendliness to all living beings, kindliness to creatures and joy at the well-being of all and these must be cultivated.

The expounding of the karma doctrine in this canto is largely based on the model of the Sarvāstivādin school which the Tamilians call as the Sautrāntika school. We cannot perceive in the teachings of Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ any element representing the

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148. *Ibid*, Canto XXX, lines 135–146
149. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXX lines 147–176
150. *Ibid*. Canto XXX, lines 177–78

''எப்பொருளுக்கும் ஆன்மா இலையெனா
இப்படி உணரும் இவை வீட்டியல்பாம்"

The statement that in anything existing there is nothing like a soul should, in this context and again in lines 177–254 of the same canto, be given a narrower interpretation and the statement seems to imply the negation of individual souls in things existing and not the universal soul which is said to be an improvement introduced by the Satyasiddhi school of Buddhism, according to Chinese authority by Harivarman. (Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar; *Maṇimēkhalai in its historical setting*, p. 82).

Vigñānavādin school of which Dingnāga was an able exponent, as also others like Dharmapāla of Kāñchī, nor can we trace in it any characteristics of the Mādhyamika school or the Śūnyavāda of Nāgārjuna. It may, however, be noted that according to Hiuen Tsang, the prevalent form of Buddhism in Kāñchī was the Sthāviravāda.[151] We know of another school of Buddhism believed to have originated at Kāñchī, viz. the Dhyāna school, the author of which is one Bōdhidharma of Kāñchī. He is said to have gone to China in 527 A. D. and introduced that system there. There is no trace of the teaching of that school in the Buddhism of *Maṇimēkhalai* and if Bodhidharma went to China in 527 A. D. his teaching must have become fairly well-known about 500 A. D. This gives support to the view that the teaching of Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ must be earlier than 500 A.D. [152]

With regard to the doctrine of Nirvāṇa we again see the author expounding the conception of Nirvāṇa as understood by the orthodox Buddhists. Nirvāṇa is throughout expounded as a release from the ills of life. There is no trace of the Mahāyāna conception of Nirvāṇa which conveys that the highest conception of Nirvāṇa is not to escape from the ills of life but universal love. To labour for one's own salvation without any consideration for others is deprecated by the Mahāyāna. "The thoughts for the good of others should always precede those for the good of self-this, in short, is the quintessence of the Mahāyāna conception of Nirvāṇa. Those who feel for the sufferings of their fellow creatures, instead of seeking for Nirvāṇa which gives happiness to them alone, should aspire for Buddhahood, by which they are born and reborn and thus get an opportunity to do good to others. We do not see anywhere in the work such a conception of Nirvāṇa. No doubt there are occasions in the work where rebirth is sought for doing

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151. Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar, *op. Cit.* p. 84

152. Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar: *Maṇimēkhalai in its historical setting* p. 84

good to others.[153] But yet the ideal before the individual is to perform good deeds in this life and thus accumulate merit with a view to attain his own Nirvāṇa ultimately, Therefore the Buddhism of the *Maṇimēkhalai* is Hīnayāna and not Mahāyāna. Although Śāttan does not say anywhere the source from which he draws out the materials in Canto XXX, comprising the teachings of the Buddha, he refers to it elsewhere in the work. The Buddhism that he teaches is the 'path of the Piṭakas of the Great One'[154] He is expounding the fundamental teachings of the Buddha and not those of the schools of Buddhism which emerged only later withva rious elaborations and modifications to the original teachings of the Buddha. Therefore it may be inferred that Śāttan lived in an age when the different systems of that religion, which were only of later growth, were unknown. Śāttan was anxious to teach what the Buddha had taught and in that sense it would mean that he taught the Sautrāntika school of the Sthāviravāda.[155] Apart from these things, the fact that the other systems of Buddhism find no mention anywhere in the work and especially in the chapter on heretical systems, where all the other systems opposed to the orthodox form of Buddhism are condemned gives

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153. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXI, lines 48–49, and 165-167

"மாயரின் மாதவன் வருபொருளுரைத்து
மருளுடை மாக்கண் மனமாசுகழூஉம்"

"மறவிருளிரிய மன்னுயி ரேமுற
வறவெயில் விரித்தாங்கலப் பிணிருந்தியாடு"

Also Cantos XII, lines 77–78; XXV lines 45–48 and XXVI, 44–46

154. *Maṇimēkhalai* Canto XXVI, lines 65–66

''மெய்வகையின்மை நினக்கே விளங்கிய
பின்னர்ப் பெரியோன் பிடகநெறி கடவாய்''

155. Dr. S. K. Iyengar: *Maṇimēkhalai in its historical setting* p. 104

a positive lead to the conclusion that the Buddhism of the epic is Hīnayāna. In none of these contexts do we find any allusions to the teachings of the Mādhyamika school or to its prominent exponents Nāgārjuna and Dēva. How is the omission to be explained? In the exposition of the various heretical systems, this system would have found mention if Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ was opposed to it. But since Sāttan omits to mention the system prevailing in Ceylon the same reason might have led him to omit the Mādhyamika school. But against this assumption may be said that though the *Mahāvaṁśa* bears witness to the fact that the people from the Tamil country were opposed to the Vibhajyavāda school of the Sthaviravāda prevalent in Ceylon, yet the author omits to refer to or criticise that system because the Sautrāntika school which he propounded was itself yet another school of the Sthāviravāda system. The same argument does not hold good with the other case viz. the omission to refer to the Mādhyamika school, for the Mādhyamika system seems to be one hostile to orthodox Buddhism and having regard to the great importance of the departure made by Nāgārjuna, the omission may well be interpreted as due to non-existence in other words as due to Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ having taught earlier than Nāgārjuna in the Tamil country. But Dr. S. K. Iyengar points out[156] this silence of the epic could be better explained in another way viz. "While he condemns systems which did not recognise the Buddha, he merely expounds a system, taught by the Buddha, and passed over outgrowths from that system with a tolerance which is not unusual in Indian thought."

Now that it has been made clear that the Buddhism embodied in the 30th chapter of the *Maṇimēkhalai* is Hīnayāna and that it has no traces of any other system, it may be stated that this teaching has been enforced by the author at least in three other places in the same work. He first puts it in the

156. *Ibid.* p. 105

mouth of the image in the pillar of the Champāpati temple in Canto XXI, and then through Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ himself in Canto XXIV where he expounds it to queen Rāsamādevi and again in Canto XXVI it is put in the mouth of the image of Kaṇṇaki which says to Maṇimēkhalai. "having learnt in this old city the wise teaching of those that profess the various religions and after feeling convinced that they do not expound the path of truth, you will then accept "the path of the Piṭakas of the Great One," and follow it without transgression."

The heretical systems mentioned in canto XXVII of the *Maṇimēkhalai* may engage our attention now. In this chapter the Vaidikavāda which accepts Vedas as its final authority is first mentioned. Three different schools of this system are referred to, those of Vēdavyāsā, Kṛitakōṭi and Jaimini. They are stated to have formulated that the valid pramāṇas or instruments of knowledge are ten, eight and six respectively.[157] The *Maṇimēkhalai* then treats of the ten pramāṇas elaborately. They are:[158]

(i) Kāṭchi (Direct perception)
(ii) Karuttu (inference)
(iii) Uvamam (Similitude)
(iv) Āgamam (Authority)
(v) Aruttāpatti (Inferential assumption)
(vi) Iyalbu (Appropriateness)
(vii) Aitiham or ulahurai (Tradition)
(viii) Abhāvam (Non-existence or negation)
(ix) Miṭchi or oḷibu (Inference by elimination or by correlation)
(x) Uṇḍaneṟi (Occurrence).

157. *Maṇimēkhalai* Canto XXVII lines 3-8
158. *Ibid* Canto XXVII lines 9-13, Dr. S.K.Iyengar, op.Cit.p.57

These are the ten pramāṇas ascribed to Vēdavyāsā. The eight pramāṇas ascribed to Kṛitakōṭi are: (i) Kātchi (ii) Karuttu (iii) Uvamam (iv) Āgamam (v) Aruttāpatti (vi) Abhāvam (vii) Uṇḍaneṛi and (viii) Aitiham. The *Maṇimēkhalai* winds up the discussion with stating six as the pramāṇas current at the time of the composition of the work. They are (i) Kātchi, (ii) Karuttu (iii) Uvamam (iv) Agamam (v) Aruttāpatti (vi) Abhāvam [159]. Then the six systems of philosophy recognised at that time are recited viz. Lōkāyata, Bauddha, Sāṁkhya, Naiyāyika, Vaiśēshika and Mīmāmsa with their respective teachers Bṛahaspathi, Jina, Kapila, Akshapāda, Kāṇāda and Jaimini. Two peculiarities may be noted in this connection. The orthodox systems accepted nowadays are Vaiśēshika, Nyāya, Sāṅkhya, Yōga, Pūrva and Uttara Mīmāmsas. But the *Maṇimēkhalai's* account differs from this. Among the six systems mentioned, *Maṇimēkhalai* omits the two well-known systems of Hindu philosophy viz., the Yōga system of Patañjali and the Vedānta system of Vyāsa and curiously enough includes Lōkāyata and Bauddha among the Vaidika systems. Lōkāyatam has not been separately treated unless we take Lōkāyata and Bhūtavāda as synonymous as indicated in the text, the latter including the former. It is strange that the Bauddha religion should be included among the systems to which the Vaidika pramāṇas applied. Prof. Jacbi is inclined to assign 5th century A. D. for the Yōga system and considers it as the latest of all the Sūtra systems and this view is supported by the fact that the *Maṇimēkhalai* does not refer to this system when treating of the various heretical systems. He also opines that Sāṅkhya also was of a comparatively late age but this position does not derive support. For the *Maṇimēkhalai*

159. *Maṇimēkhalai* Canto XXVII, lines 83–85

"மெய்ப் பிரத்திய மனுமானஞ்சாத்த
முவமான மருத்தாபத்தியபாவ
மிவையே யிப்போதியன்றுள வளவைகள்"

specifically mentions the Sāṅkhya system.[160] Amongst the other heretical systems mentioned in the *Maṇimēkhalai* are the Śaivavāda, Vaishṇavāda, Brahmavāda and Vēdavāda which may be collectively called the Vaidikavāda.' Maṇimēkhalai approached the representatives of these five systems and learnt from them their respective philosophies but was not convinced.

The six systems mentioned do not include Arhata, the system of the Jains which is dealt with separately as an independent system among those considered heretical by the Buddhists. It is under the name Nirgrantha. The Ājīvikas and the Nirgranthas are dealt with separately in the *Maṇimēkhalai*. While the *Maṇimēkhalai* in its final passage seems to include the two in one, it still treats of the two separately to the extent of being regarded, if not as independent, at least as separate systems. Later Tamil writers on religious topics like Śivagñāna Śitthiyār treat the two systems, the Ājīvika and the Nirgrantha as branches of Jainism, and a later Tamil work Nīlakēsi also assumes the same position. The confusion between the Ājīvika and the Jaina is as old as the *Divyāvadāna* itself but the *Maṇimēkhalai* maintains their distinct character. There is reference to a tax in the Tamil country called the "Ājīvika kāśu" and the recognition of the Ājīvika sect as distinct from and independent of Jainism is evidence of a time for the *Maṇimēkhalai* when the distinct character was fully recognised.[161] It may also be mentioned here that in the *Śilappadikāram* Kaṇṇaki's father is said to have joined the Ājīvika sect and this reference to the Ājīvikas independent of

160. Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar, *Maṇimēkhalai in its historisal setting* p. 69.

161. Dr. S. K. Aiyaṅgar's article entitled 'A School of South Indian Buddhism in Kāñchī' in the *Proceedings of the Fourth Oriental Conference*, (1926) p. 821

the Jains speaks in favour of the view that the religion of the Ājīvikas did exist separately in the Tamil country. The teachers of these two systems, the Ājīvika and the Nirgrantha are referred to as Mārkali and "Arhat worshipped of all Indras" respectively. The authoritative work of the Ājīvikas is said to be Navakadir. After discussing with the representatives of these two sects, Maṇimēkhalai meets the teachers of the systems of Sāṁkhya, Vaiśēshika and Bhūtavāda, the atheistic system, treated as almost the same as the Lōkāyata and after hearing from them what they have had to say about their respective systems she feels satisfied for having acquired a competent knowledge of the different systems of religion prevalent in those days.

We now come to Canto XXIX where the Buddhist system of thought is expounded though the actual teaching of Buddhism comes only later. Like other religions Buddhism also had its own method of enquiry into the validity of knowledge and the actual means of attaining to valid knowledge. Therefore for a proper understanding of the teachings of Buddhism of that time, it becomes necessary to make a preliminary enquiry into knowledge and the means of attaining to that knowledge by a logically valid method. Canto XXIX of the *Maṇimēkhalai* therefore constitutes a treatise on Buddhist logic as taught in the school of Buddhism at Kāñchī or more generally in the Tamil country. It has to be noted that what the heroine Maṇimēkhalai asks for is instruction in the true doctrine,[162] that this instruction is offered only in Canto XXX and that the whole of Canto XXIX constitutes only a preliminary account to that instruction. Granting that some logical grounding is necessary for metaphysical instruction, that grounding as such need not be so elaborate nor need the treatment of fallacies be so extensive.

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162. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXIX, line 45

"அடிகள் மெய்ப்பொருள் அருளுகவென்ன"

In the canto expounding Buddhist logic Aṟavaṇa aḍigal starts with the statement that the first teacher of Buddhism is Jinendra, which is another name for the Buddha, and should not be confounded with the name Jina Vardhamāna or Mahāvīra, the founder of Jainism. According to him there are only two pramāṇas or instruments of knowledge (Aḷavai), viz. faultless perception, (ētamil pirattiyam) and inference (Karuttu). Other pramāṇas are not valid according to him. Though this is taken to be the general characteristic of Buddhism, a certain number of pramāṇas must have been enunciated and examined by the different systems including Buddhism and must have been finally accepted or rejected according to their validity. As a matter of fact, the *Maṇimēkhalai* refers to the existence and recognition of other pramāṇas too as applicable to Buddhism but the Buddhist teachers actually selected two by the method of inclusion and rejected the other four as capable of being included in the second viz. anumāna. The other pramāṇas even of the ten ascribed to Vēdavyāsa are not exactly rejected but are regarded as superfluous. Knowledge acquired by direct perception is taken to be 'Śuttuṇarvu' (pratyaksha) and name (nāma), class (jāti), quality (guṇa) and action (kriya) are excluded from this as these could be included in anumāna. Anumāna (inference) is said to be of three kinds: Kāraṇa (inference by cause), Kārya (inference by consequence) and sāmānya (common inference) of which inference by cause and common inference are said to be liable to error whereas inference from result, as from smoke fire is stated to be free from error. Then the other instruments of knowledge according to the *Maṇimēkhalai*, are five viz. (1) Pakkam பக்கம் (proposition), (2) Hētu ஹேது(reason), (3)Tiṭṭāntam திட்டாந்தம் (example), (4) Upanaya (உபநயம்); application), (5) Nigamana நிகமனம் (conclusion). Of these Pakkam consists in saying that *the hill has fire in it*. When we say it is so *because it smokes* we are stating the reason: if we add *just like a kitchen*, we are giving an example. To say that the *hill also smokes*, is to state

the application. *If it has smoke it must have fire* is coming to a conclusion. That which has no fire can have no smoke like water, is the contrary concomitant of the proposition and is negative application. These are obviously the five limbs of a syllogism. It may be noted here that these five limbs are exactly similar to those accepted by the Brāhmaṇical systems. After dealing with the first three, viz. Pakkam, Hētu, and Tiṭṭāntam elaborately and defining and illustrating them, the *Maṇimēkhalai* comes to the conclusion that upanaya and nigamana, the remaining two may be included in Tiṭṭāntam and so they are not treated separately. Then the work proceeds to consider the good and bad application of Pakkam, Hētu and Tiṭṭāntam. Paksha, Hētu and Drishṭānta are of two kinds valid or invalid. A valid paksha is that which has included in it (1) the explicit subject possessed of attributes and (2) the changes that the plainly discernible attribute of the conclusion undergoes when found elsewhere. For example to say that sound is either eternal or non-eternal is a valid paksha. Fallacious or invalid paksha is of nine kinds.

The hētu is the connecting term which appears in three forms; either it is attributed to the subject, or it is ascribed to an example by analogy or it is denied to the contrary. Fallacious hētu or hētuppōli is of three kinds: asiddham அசித்தம் or unproved, anaikāntikam அநைகாந்திகம் or uncertain and viruddham விருத்தம் or contradictory. Then it goes on to show that the first is of four kinds; the second of it is of six kinds and the third is of four kinds.

Similarly valid drishṭānta is of two kinds either homogeneous (sādharmya) or heterogeneous (vaidharmya). The former falls into five parts as also the latter. These are then fully illustrated in the work. Having thus expounded the system of logic with clear definitions and apt illustrations he concludes by saying "in the manner expounded above understand clearly the fallacious character of the inference that is produced by the

fallacious character of the reasoning. Thus distinguishing truth and falsehood by the method taught above, understand without doubt and on due consideration what is truth".

Thus canto XXIX gives a beautiful exposition of the Buddhist philosophy and canto XXX is replete with references to the teachings of Buddhism. From the above account it may undoubtedly be stated that the author Śāttanār was not merely a poet but also an eminent philosopher with an extensive knowledge in the field of Buddhist religion. The way in which he enumerates the various doctrines of Buddhism and the many details that he gives throughout the work regarding the life of the Buddha and his teachings all lead us to the conclusion that he was very well conversant with the authoritative works on Buddhist religion. He makes use of the character in the work, Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ in propounding the truths of Buddhism and especially when he is expatiating on the teachings of the Buddha, the poet is seen at his best. Again the remarkable skill with which he deals with the subject on Buddhist logic in canto XXIX reveals him as a philosopher, with deep insight into the philosophical sides of Buddhism and reinforces the conclusion that he was not a mere poet but a poet-philosopher.

From the extraordinary coincidence of definitions, illustrations and even order of enumeration in several instances between Chapter XXIX of the *Maṇimēkhalai* and the *Nyāyapravēśa* of Dingnāga, some scholars have come to the conclusion that the *Maṇimēkhalai* is based upon the *Nyāyapravēśa* and other works of Dingnāga and that "while section XXIX of the *Maṇimēkhalai* cannot be assigned to the pre-Dingnāga period of Buddhist logic, there are sufficient indications to place it in the post-Dingnāga period, close to the transition to certain departments advocated by Dharmakīrti by way of improvement."[163]

163. Prof. S. Kuppuśwāmi Śāstri's Article entitled "Problems of identity in the cultural history of India–Aṟavaṇa Aḍigaḷ" in the *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, 1927, p.196.

The question of the authorship of *Nyāyapravēśa* is itself one of controversy and scholars are ranged in two groups, viz. the Tibetan school and the Chinese school. The Tibetan school ascribes the authorship of the work to Dingnāga while the Chinese school regards it as the work of Śaṅkarasvāmin, a disciple of Dingnāga. *Nyāyapravēśa* is regarded as a work composed by Śaṅkarasvāmin to facilitate entrance into the *Nyāyadvāra* which is a work of his master, Dingnāga.[164] Dr. Vidyābhūshaṇa and Paṇḍiṭ Vidhusēkhara Baṭṭāchārya hold that it is the work of Dingnāga. But the Sanskrit work as published in the Gaekwad Oriental Series does not say anything as to who is the author of the work. It is strange to note that even Hiuen Tsang who thought so highly of the work that he took a copy of it with him for translation, does not say anywhere that Dingnāga wrote it. It is clear from Hiuen Tsang's account about Dingnāga that a certain work called *Hētuvidya*, a work of great antiquity and authority, the authorship of which was ascribed to the Lord of the world himself did exist during the time of Dingnāga and appreciating its great value and merit and in order to make it easily understandable to the people he expounded its teaching by writing a simpler treatise on the same subject. Thus it could be inferred that the *Nyāyapravēśa* of Dingnāga was only a handbook or compendium of an original book which had been in existence for some considerable time.[165] But from the point of view of chronology this controversy about the authorship of the work need not be taken serious notice of, for the master and the pupil belong to the same age. But whenever the chronological relationship of other works to this is discussed, it is considered

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164. A. B. Dhuruva: *Nyāyapravēśa*–Gaekwad Oriental Series, Introduction, p. XIII.

165. K. G. Śēsha Iyer's Article entitled "The date of Maṇimēkhalai" in the *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, 1927, pp. 322–24.

in terms of Dingnāga's authorship, who is far better known than his disciple.[166]

Prof. Kuppusvami Śāstri has presented[167] in parallel columns the remarkable coincidence of the concepts of logic and philosophy of Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ with those of Dingnāga and the points of coincidence brought to light are the doctrine of two pramāṇas, the definition of pratyaksha, the five avayavas of which only three have been recognised, the nine paksha ābāsas, the three hetuābāsas, the five Drishṭānta ābāsas etc. Above all definitions and the illustrations and the method of treatment-all bear very close similartiy to those in the *Nyāyapravēsa*. From this he concludes that the *Maṇimēkhalai* must have drawn its material for canto XXIX on Buddhist logic from the *Nyāyapravēsa* and other works of Dingnāga and thus places *Maṇimēkhalai* in the post-Dingnāga period. He also argues that there are certain unmistakable indications to show that the *Maṇimēkhalai* should be assigned to the period between Dingnāga and Dharmakīrti, for certain important modifications in Dingnāga's classification of fallacies introduced by Dharmakīrti in his *Nyāyabindu* are not to be found in canto XXIX of the *Maṇimēkhalai* and points out that while the *Maṇimēkhalai* should be later than Dingnāga it should be anterior to Dharmakīrti. He also believes that there flourished some loyal followers between Dingnāga and Dharmakīrti like Dharmapāla and makes the interesting suggestion that Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ was no other than the great Āchārya Dharmapāla. Prof. Śāstri assigns the earlier part of the 5th century A. D. to Dingnāga and on the basis of Beal's *Buddhist Records of the western world* and Dr. Satīśchandra Vidhyābhūshaṇa's *History of Indian Logic* places Dharmapāla in C. 600–635 A.D. And on the basis of these two assigns the

166. A. B. Dhuruva: *Nyāyapravēśa*– Gaekwad Oriental Series, introduction, P. XIII.

167. *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, 1927, pp. 191–201

Maṇimēkhalai as late a date as the 7th century A. D. [168] Prof. Śāstri assigns 5th century A. D. to Dingnāga but K.G. Śēsha Iyer on the basis that Nāgārjuna and Dingnāga were separated by 200 years as stated in Vidhyābhūshaṇa's *History of Indian Logic* and on the basis of the death of Nāgārjuna in the 1st century B. C. assigns 2nd century A. D. to Dingnāga. Similarly R. Narasi mhāchāriyar, accepting that the *Maṇimēkhalai*'s account of logic is borrowed from the *Nyāyaprveśa* of Dingnāga shifts the date of Dingnāga, from the generally accepted one viz. 5th century A. D. to the 2nd century A. D., his argument being that the *Maṇimēkhalai* is a production of the Śaṅgam Age which is generally accepted to be 2nd century A. D. and as the *Nyāyapravēśa* is said to be incorporated in it, the latter should belong to an earlier period.[169] But this position is quite unacceptable and does great violence to all the accepted literary traditions which proclaim the contemporaneity of Dingnāga and Vasubandhu. This contemporaneity can not be

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168. *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, 1927, p. 197. Though such a late date to this work militates against the accepted the ories regarding the Śaṅgam age to which the *Maṇimēkhalai* also belongs, Prof. Śāstri proceeds to justify his position by saying that there is no denying the possibility of certain Tamil king undertaking invasions or pilgrimages to the north in the 7th century A. D. To strengthen his stand he further identifies the Māḷwa king stated in the *Silappadikāram* to have been present on the occasion of the consecration ceremony with Śilāditya I of the Valabhi dynasty of Māḷwa who ruled from 595 to 601 A. D. and thinks that probably the king of Kāñchī referred to in Canto XXVIII of *Maṇimēkhalai* might be Mahēndravarman who might have maintained a favourable attitude towards Buddhism in the earlier part of his reign.

169. Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar: *Maṇimēkhalai in its historical setting*, p. 100

called in question and it is impossible to assign an earlier date to Vasubandhu as this position would imply. But the best way to solve this conflict would be to consider the *Maṇimēkhalai* as a work belonging to the pre-Dingnāga period and not the post-Dingnāga period and even if, by the striking similarities between the works of Dingnāga and the *Maṇimēkhalai* on philosophical questions, we are forced to accept the indebtedness of the *Maṇimēkhalai* to Dingnāga, it is possible that the *Maṇimēkhalai* might have borrowed such philosophical ideas from works of high authority and antiquity like *Hetuvidya* which existed even in days long anterior to Dingnāga and to which Dingnāga himself prepared a compendium so as to render it easy for ordinary readers. In other words, it is possible that both the author of the *Maṇimēkhalai* and Dingnāga borrowed from the same source and gave the subject their own characteristic twist. As Dr. S. K. Aiyaṅgar has very aptly remarked: "it would be very difficult to ascribe the originating of any very particular item of teaching in these departments to particular authors except to the extent of their having committed these items of teaching to writing in works that have become accessible to us. As a rule it may be taken that these teachings were for a considerable length of time in the floating traditions of the schools before they got entry in written texts."[170]

Then coming to the interesting suggestion made by Prof. Śāstri that Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ of the *Maṇimēkhalai* is none other than the celebrated Buddhist logician Dharmapāla of Kāñchī, we know from the epic *Maṇimēkhalai*, that Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ was living at Kāvirippaṭṭinam when Maṇimēkhalai first sought him and he was then already well advanced in age. He afterwards went to Vañji and from there to Kāñchī where ultimately Maṇimēkhalai received instructions from him. No doubt he once went northwards on a pilgrimage to the Buddhist holy

170. Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar: *Maṇimēkhalai in its historical setting*, p. 99

place, Gridharakūṭa, but he spent his life mainly at Kāvirippaṭṭinam and later at Kāñchī. On the other hand, it is true that Dharmapāla was born at Kāñchī but with this his connection with Kāñchī ceases, for when he was young he left Kāñchī for North India which became the scene of his activities later. He also became the Chancellor of the Nālandā University and had many disciples. In view of these differences in all known incidents of the personal history of these two, Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ and Dharmapāla, it is difficult to believe that both were one and the same person and Mr. K G. Śēsha Iyer assuming that Dingnāga belonged to the 2nd century A. D. identifies Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ with Dingnāga himself[171]. But we have already seen the untenability of the assumption that Dingnāga belonged to the 2nd century A. D.

Prof. Kuppuswāmi Śāstri in order to strengthen this identification of Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ with Dharmapāla adopts a circuitous method and takes into consideration the expression 'ētamil' (எதமில்) occurring in Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ's enumeration of the sources of knowledge:

"ஆதிசினேந்திரன் அளவை இரண்டே
எதமில் பிரத்தியங் கருத்தளவென்ன"
(Canto XXIX, 47–48)

The qualification of perception as 'faultless' எதிரில் பிரத்தியம் is possibly equivalent to 'abhranta' and this qualification was believed to have been first introduced into the definition of perception by Dharmakīrti, and as Prof. Śāstri is in favour of assigning the *Maṇimēkhalai* to a date anterior to Dharmakīrti, he goes on to give a twist to the order of words and states that 'ētamil' should be taken to qualify not 'perception' (பிரத்தியம்) but knowledge in general. Therefore there is no satisfactory

171. K. G. Śēsha Iyer's article entitled 'The date of Maṇimēkhalai" in the *Journal of Oriental Research*, Madras, 1927, p. 328.

basis for his theory that the *Maṇimēkhalai* is a post–Dingnāga work. For the introduction of the qualification in the definition of perception is not a distinctive contribution of Dharmakirti for as Prof. Tucci has shown Dharmakirti himself seems to have taken it from earlier Sautrāntika writers:[172] he was only restating a qualification known to earlier Buddhist logicians and not formulating a new one.

It must be admitted that the resemblance between the *Nyayapravēśa* of Dingnāga and the *Maṇimēkhalai* is so complete and striking that the *Nyāyapravēśa* must be supposed to be either inserted in or extracted out of *Maṇimēkhalai*. With regard to the former hypothesis i. e. the *Nyāyapravēśa* must be inserted in the *Maṇimēkhalai*, it is said that the *Maṇimēkhalai* is after all a romance and not primarily a work on logic and that the author of the *Maṇimēkhalai*, Śāttan, is not a Śāstrin, nor a Professor of Philosophy but a poet and grain merchant. Naturally he had to gather information from the various sources and a writer of a romance borrowing a book of logic from a logician and inserting it in his work to demonstrate his Śāstraic learning is far more likely than a logician extracting a chapter of romance and passing it off as his work[173]. That the *Maṇimēkhalai* is a romantic poem cannot be denied but it has to be remembered that it is a romance based on historical occurrences and that its author was a friend and contemporary of the Chēra king Śeṅguṭṭuvan, and whatever may be the opinion about the work, its character must be governed by these two considerations. It is also true that Śāttan was first and foremost a poet and not a philosopher. But "if the tradition

172. Prof. Tucci's Article entitled "Buddhist Logic Before Dingnāga" in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, July 1929, pp. 470–472.

173. Prof. Jacobi, quoted in Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar's "*Maṇimēkhalai in its historical setting*" p. 93.

of the Tamil land could be believed much true philosophic influence has been inspired to professed teachers and founders of systems from sources far less reputable than that of the grain merchant Śāttan."[174] It would he unreasonable, therefore, to question the authorship of the work on this basis alone, for as we have seen, Śāttan has admirably exhibited throughout the work his profound knowledge of Buddhism and Buddhist works and as a person with strong leanings towards Buddhism it is not improbable that he might have mastered Buddhist logic too.

Without going into further details we may conclude this portion by stating as Dr. Krishṇaswāmi Iyeṅgar does, that canto XXIX of the *Maṇimēkhulai* which expounds the Buddhist logic through Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ takes in several respects a halting position between old Brāhmaṇical Nyāya of Akshapāda and Vātsyāyana and the Nyāya of Dingnāga, and that the Buddhist logic taught by Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ in the Tamil country ultimately found its most illustrious exponent in Dingnāga who codified the teaching in the form in which he has given it out to the world.[175]

The points of difference between the *Maṇimēkhalai* and the *Nyāyapravēśa* may briefly be noted here. (a) The *Maṇimēkhalai* accepts only two pramāṇas viz. Pratyaksha and Anumāna, others being capable of inclusion in the second and 'others' here refers to the four pramāṇas out of the six mentioned in canto XXVII as current at the time; whereas Dingnāga seems to have no such qualms and actually deals with the four pramāṇas of the Naiyāyikas viz. Pratyaksha, Anumāna, Upamāna and Sabda and retains the first two and rejects the other two as not valid, whereas the *Maṇimēkhalai* does not assert their validity. Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ actually teaches this as the orthodox method according to the teaching of the Buddha himself

174. Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar: *Maṇimēkhalai in its historical setting,* p. 94.

175. *Ibid*, p. 79.

and of nobody else. If Aravaṇa aḍigaḷ came after Dingnāga one may expect him to quote the authority of the great logician. The fact that he does not do so and refers back to the actual teaching of the Buddha himself may be taken to mean that Aravaṇa aḍigaḷ represents a school of thought anterior to Dingnāga

(b) Again with regard to the members of Syllogism also the *Maṇimēkhalai* marks a stage of transition. According to the *Maṇimēkhalai* the instruments of knowledge are five, viz. Paksha, Hetu, Drishṭānta, Upanaya and Nigamana. But it deals elaborately only with the first three limbs of syllogism, defining and illustrating, and does not consider separately the other two, viz., Upanaya, Nigamana and comes to the conclusion that both may be included in the third, viz. Drishṭānta, whereas the Nyāyapravēśa proceeds to state that Paksha, Hētu and Drishṭānta are the three limbs of syllogism, and does not find it necessary to consider the last two at all. It is well known that it was Dingnāga who first reduced the five limbed syllogism of the Naiyāyikas to one of three limbs, thereby giving it a form similar to the Aristotelian syllogism of three members. (c) Dingnāga treats of Svārtha(for one's knowledge) and parārtha (for the purpose of convincing others) forms of anumāna and after a serious discussion comes to the conclusion that the latter being included in the former it is superfluous to treat of it separately for there could be no effort at convincing others without being convinced oneself. The *Maṇimēkhalai* on the other hand deals with only the first, viz. convincing oneself and does not consider it necessary to discuss the latter at all.

Thus concluding the section on Buddhist Philosophy as expounded in the *Maṇimēkhalai*[175a] we shall pass on to make a

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175a. The matter in the foregoing discussion is largely based on Dr. S. K. Iyengar's '*Maṇimēkhalai in its historical setting*'

few general remarks about the work so far as it concerns our subject under treatment. The author of the *Maṇimēkhalai* being a Buddhist and his object being the glorification of Buddhism we see throughout the work Buddhism being thrown into bold relief. The author has not failed to show us that there existed side by side with Buddhism a number of religions like Jainism, Saivism, Vaishṇavism and the atheist cult of Lōkāyata. Canto XXVII bears testimony to this fact and we are introduced there to a number of cults said to have been flourishing in the Chēra capital, Vañji. Besides this throughout the work there are scattered references to the different religions. Though there existed a variety of cults, the religious harmony was not marred and the spirit of hatred and intolerance was quite alien to the tendency of the age. Yet, the author's admiration for Buddhism is so great that wesee here and there a tendency on the part of the author to be critical about the other religions and he actually indulges in rediculing other religions and their doctrines. In every one of these instances it is pretty clear that the author attempts to establish the superiority of his religion over others. For instance, in canto III the author when describing a street scene indulges in ridiculing a Jaina ascetic and makes use of a drunkard to serve this purpose. [176]. Again in canto V the author exhibits his partiality to Buddhism and makes the readers believe that the Buddhists are more kind-hearted and sympathetic towards fellow beings than the Jains and to illustrate this he inserts the story of Sutamati, the companion of Maṇimēkhalai.[177] Sutamati narrating the story of how she was first in a Jain hermitage and later came over to Mādhavi, describes the bitter experiences that she and her father had to undergo at the instance of the Jain ascetics. Sutamati was the daughter of a certain Brāhmaṇ from the city of Champā and she lost her mother even in her youth. Once she was carried

176. *Maṇimēkhalai* Canto III, lines 86–103

177. *Ibid*. Canto V, lines 31–79.

off by a Vidyādhara and her father came in search of her and found her at Kāvirippūmpaṭṭinam and took upon himself the life of a mendicant beggar to eke out his and her livelihood. In one of his begging rounds a cow ran at him and tore open his stomach. Holding his entrails in his hand, he came to the hermitage of the Jains and sought asylum there. The inmates of the hermitage instead of giving asylum turned him out from there and the daughter and the father were wandering in this desperate condition crying out if there were any kind hearted people to take them into their protection. A kind hearted Buddhist Bikshu, who was coming on his midday round, carried her father to the vihāra where he lived and relieved him of his pain and suffering. This story very well illustrates that the Jains are not as kind hearted and sympathetic as the Buddhists and the poet has remarkably succeeded here in his cherished object of glorifying Buddhism. Again in canto XIII we see the author exhibiting his sentiments against Vedic sacrifices and mocking at Brāhmaṇs.[178] This purpose of the author is served in this context through Āputra, a character in the work who out of sympathy for a cow that has been kept ready for sacrifice in a sacrificial ground in the Brāhmaṇ locality releases it and speaks in condemnation of vedic sacrifices. One unmistakable evidence of the sectarian spirit of the author could be found in Canto XXI where Śāttan when referring to the teachings of the other religions uses the appellation 'false' to qualify them.[179] Thereby he wants the readers to understand that the teachings of Buddhism alone are true and hence superior to all others.

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178. *Maṇimēkhalai* Canto XIII, lines 92-99

179. *Ibid* Canto XXI lines 94–101

"இறைவனெங்கோ னெவ்வுயி ரனைத்து
முறைமையிற் படைத்த முதல்வனென்போர்களும்
... ...
பல்வேறு சமயப் படிற்றுவரை யெல்லாம்."

Maṇimēkhalai–Jātaka Parallels.[180]

It would be a subject of interesting study to examine the close similarities between certain accounts described in the *Maṇimēkhalai* and those occurring in the *Jātaka stories.* The large number of identical incidents occurring in the *Jātaka stories*, which relate to the previous births of the Buddha, coupled with their striking similarities in every detail would really behove one to say that the author of the *Maṇimēkhalai* has very closely adopted the *Jātaka stories* in narrating the incidents in his work, and a careful analysis of the parallels would enable us to perceive in the *Maṇimēkhalai* the enormous influence of the *Jātaka stories.* No doubt the *Maṇimēkhalai* abounds in many supernatural occurrences and this is a very common feature in the Buddhist *Jātakas.* The Buddhists and the Jains believed that by writing such books consisting of stories relating to the past births of the founders of those religions, stories illustrative of certain morals and stories embodying their doctrines, they would be able to propagate their religion and as a result of this came out works like the *Jātaka stories* which, no doubt, served as a successful medium in their work of proselytization. Perhaps they thought that their rigid and subtle doctrines might appeal to the masses if they are explained to them by means of short stories and anecdotes illustrative of their teachings in simple and plain language. The author of the *Maṇimēkhalai* seems to have acquiesced in this and throughout the work there are references to similar stories and anecdotes illustrating the superiority of the Buddhist religion.

Some of the incidents described in the *Maṇimēkhalai* are so strikingly similar to those in the *Jātaka stories* that there is no doubt that the author of the *Maṇimēkhalai* was very well-versed

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180. In the treatment of this section I have closely followed the account given by Vidwan M. Rāghava Iyeṅgar in his article entitled "மணிமேகலையும் புத்தஜாதகமும்" in the "ஆராய்ச்சித் தொகுதி" pages 218–230.

in the Buddhist literature in general and had deeply studied works like the *Jāt ıkas* in particular. We shall catelogue below som: of the parallels between the two.

(i) *The Goddess Maṇimēkhalai.* This Goddess is depicted in the story as the 'guardian deity of the sea' and her duty is to offer help to the worthy among the ship-wrecked. It is believed that this Goddess is appointed by Indra to protect ceratin islands and the seas from the disturbance of the Aśuras. She only helps those who possess the requisite qualifications for becoming future Buddhas, those who by their charity, generosity and liberality perform meritorious acts and thus make themselves fit to attain Buddhahood. According to this story, this Goddess is said to have saved from shipwreck one of the predecessors of Kōvalan, the father of the heroine of the poem. When Maṇimēkhalai was born, Mādhavi, her mother consulted Kōvalan as to what name should be given to the child. It is said that Kōvalan suggested the name Maṇimēkhalai in order to honour the deity of that name who once rescued one of his predecessors from being drowned in the Ocean.[181] Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ tells this story to Maṇımēkhalai when she meets him at Vañji and that one of her father's ancestors, generation before suffered shipwreck and was lost in the sea, "much like a golden needle in a rich carpet of gold" and was struggling continuously for seven days on the sea, when Indra, understanding this by the quiver in his white carpet commanded the Goddess to save him from death, and that the deity did so. The same incident is referred to in another part of the work [182] where Tivatilakai the Goddess of

181. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXIX, lines 16-31

182. *Ibid* Canto XXV iines 207-210

"பரப்புநீர் பௌவம் பலர் தொழக்காப்போன்
உரைத்தன கேட்கவுறுகுவையாயினின்
மன்னுயிர் முதல்வனை மணிமேகலைதெய்வம்
முன்றுனெடுத்தது."

the isle of Maṇipallavam narrates the same incident of the Maṇimēkhalai deity saving the life of a merchant who was an ancestor of Kōvalan. The *Silappadikāram* also refers to thist radition about the Maṇimēkhalai deity having saved from shipwreck an ancestor of Kōvalan [183]. It is to honour this deity that Kōvalan named his daughter *Maṇimēkhalai* and the incidents narrated in connection with this name bear very excellent parallels in the Buddhist Jātaka stories and the influence of the *Śaṅkha Jātaka* is very easily discernible in the story of *Maṇimēkhalai* and the story of the *Śaṅkha Jātaka* may be briefly stated here. "In olden days Benares was called Mōlini and when Brahmadatta was its ruler, there was one Brāhmaṇ called Śaṁkha who was rich and had founded alms houses in six places where he used to make great charities. Before his wealth evaporated he wanted to procure more wealth to continue his charities and accordingly decided to sail to the land of Gold and bring wealth. After navigating for seven days his ship leaked and could not be emptied of water. The whole crew which accompanied him trembled and invoked each his own God. But Śaṅkha took one of his servants along with him, got up the deck and jumped into the sea and he spent seven days in the sea in this manner. At this time the Gods who protected the earth had installed the Goddess *Maṇimēkhalai* to watch over the sea. "If there is a ship-wreck and if men are in danger men who have taken the three refuges or who observe the vow of holiness or who piously worship their parents, thou protect them"-this was the injunction by the Gods. On the seventh day the Goddess saw the Brāhmaṇ Śaṁkha struggling on the sea and with some Heavenly food in her hand she appeared before him and offered it to him. He refused to

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183. *Silappadikāram*, Canto XXV, lines 28

receive it and wanted only a boat with strong planks and immense wealth so as to enable him to continue his charities.'[184] A noteworthy point in this connection is that the number of days viz., seven during which the merchant was struggling on the ocean is exactly corresponding to what is said in the *Maṇimēkhalai.*[185] Again the deity explicitly says that she is doing this help for his limitless charity and righteous conduct.[186] -another striking similarity between the two versions. The incidents referred to in both the works are so strikingly similar even in details, that it appears that the one is merely a reproduction of the same story with some more details. Similarly there is also another Jātaka story, *Mahājanaka Jātaka*[187] which bears very close resemblance to the story contained in the *Maṇimēkhalai* about this Goddess. In this story also Mahājanaka, a prince, is caught in a shipwreck and is saved by the Maṇimēkhala deity. This Goddess was known as the 'Sea Goddess' even in countries like Indo China, Siam, Burma and Ceylon and she was an ardent devotee of the Buddha. Prof. Sylvain Levy says that in Cambodia also she is depicted as a sea-goddess and suggests that this deity belongs to South India and that her place of worship

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184. E. B. Cowell: *The Jātaka or Stories of the Buddha's former births,* Vol. IV, Story 442, pp. 9-11. This story was narrated by the Buddha at the request of a lay monk at Śāvatthi.

185. *Maṇimēkhalai* Canto XXIX, line 19
"எழுநாளெல்லையிருக்கண் வந்தெய்தா"

186 *Śilapadikāram* Canto XI lines 28-30
"இடையருன்யாமத்து எழிதிரைப் பெருகடல்
உடை கலப்பட்ட வெங்கோன் முன்னுள்
புன்னிய தானம் புரிந்தேனுதலின்."

187. E. B. Cowell: The Jataka Story 539. Vol. VI, pp. 21-23. This story was told by the Buddha when he was dwelling at the Jētavana monastery concerning the Great Renunciation.

may be Kāñchi or Kāvirippaṭṭinam.[188] But there are some who attempt to find a place for this Goddess in Buddhist pantheon and the Maṇimēkhala deity is equated with Tārā of the Buddhists.[189] The Goddess Tārā is the "mistress of the boats and she controls waves and floods". Tārā, the mother, whom waters obey is the chief of those Śaktīs who guide the boats. She has millions of boat women under her and she bestows wealth like Lakshmī". In the light of this the Maṇimēkhalā deity is considered to be none other than Tārā. But the cult of Tārā was unknown in India prior to the 6th century A.D. and on this basis the work *Maṇimēkhalai* is assigned to a late age. But this identification rests on very flimsy grounds.

2. *Pāṇḍukambaḷa, the white carpet of Indra.*

The white carpet is considered to be the seat of Indra, and this seat will quiver whenever Bodhisattvas appear in this world and whenever they are in distress without any help, and it is supposed that Indra understands the significance of these quivers, whenever they occur and rushes to the help of Bodhisattvas. We have two such instances in the *Maṇimēkhalai* itself. For instance, in Canto XIV[190] we are informed that God Indra came to know of the liberal gift of food made by Āputra to all living beings by the quiver of his white carpet seat. It is said that thereafter Indra appeared before Āputra and expressed his great appreciation for the meritorious act that he was doing and promised to confer upon him some boon.

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188. Prof. Sylvain Levy's article in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, 1931, p. 173

189. K. V. Rāmachandran - *Journal of Oriental Research* Madras, Part II, pp. 220-21.

190. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XIV, lines 29-30
"விண்டுநீர் ஞாலத்திவன் செயலிந்திரன்
பாண்டு கம்பளந்துளங்கிய தாதலின்"

Again in Canto XXIX[191] we see the seat of Indra being mentioned. When one of Kōvalan's ancestors some generations before was caught in a shipwreck and was struggling in the sea continuously for seven days, it is said that Indra came to know of his distress by the usual quiver of his white carpet seat and commanded the Sea Goddess under his control to offer succour to him. From these contexts we may understand that this Pāṇḍukambaḷam is the seat of God Indra or a white carpet on which was the seat of Indra. In the *Jātaka stories* also there is frequent mention about Indra and his throne. In the *Jātakas* it is described as a yellow stone throne and mention is also made of its quiver on certain occasions. In the *Samgamāv'cara Jātaka* [192] the story is related of how a prince by name Nanda was made to lead an ascetic life. In the course of the story is said that the prince was taken to the abode of Indra and reference is made here to the yellow stone throne of Indra. In another Jātaka story, *Sarabha Miga Jātaka*[193] the yellow stone throne is again mentioned as one in the abode of Indra along with the coral tree which also grew there. The *Divyāvadāna* also calls the throne of Indra by the name Pāṇḍukambaḷa.[194] In the *Akitta Jātaka* is also mentioned the marble stone of Indra. It is also said that as a result of the virtuous acts of Brāhmaṇ ascetic, called Akitta the throne of Indra became hot and then Indra rushed to the ascetic to give him what he wanted.[195]

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191. *Ibid* Canto XXIX lines 14–22.
"வழுவாச்சீலம் வாய்மையிற்கொண்ட
பாண்மையிற்றுனது பாண்டு கம்பளந்
தானடுக்குற்றதன்மை நோக்கி" (Lines 20–22)

192. E. B. Cowell: *Op.cit.* Vol. II Story 187, p.63.

193. *Ibid.* Vol IV, Story 483, pp. 166-68

194. *Divyāvadāna*, University Press, Cambridge pp. 194–95.

195. E. B. Cowell: *Op.cit.* Vol. IV Story No. 480. pp. 148–51

3. *The Island of Maṇipallavam.*

This island very often figures in the work *Maṇimēkhalai* and Śāttanār says that it is 30 *yōjanas* south of Kāvirippūmpaṭṭinam[196], the then Chōḷa capital and it contains a miraculous Buddha seat capable of revealing to those who worshipped it the secrets of their past lives and a pond called Gōmuki. It was to this island that *Maṇimēkhalai* was first taken, informed of her previous life and later got the miraculous begging bowl from the pond there. Maṇipallavam is now identified with a portion of the present Jaffna called 'Kāraittīvu'. That Puhār and Maṇipallavam had contacts from times immemorial is evident from another Jātaka stroy, the Akitta Jātaka.[197] This story was narrated by the Buddha when he was in the Jetavana monastery while describing how a Brāhmin magnate by name Akitta distributed all his treasure in alms. It is here that there is specific reference to the Tamil country and Kāvirippaṭṭinam. Akitta, after distributing all his wealth in charity left the house accompanied by his sister and was leading an ascetic's life in a small hermitage. It is said that even without informing his sister one day he alone departed and "came to the kingdom of Damila, where dwelling in a part over against Kāvirippṭṭana he cultivated a mystic ecstasy and the supernatural faculties". From there, we are informed, he proceeded to the isle of Kāra which is over against the island of Nāga. In the *Jātaka stories* the island of Nāga is often used to denote Ceylon (vide the *Valāhassa Jātaka*[198] and the *Sussondi*

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196. *Maṇimēkhalai* Canto VI, lines 211-13

"அந்தரம் ஆரு ஆறைந்தியோசனைத்
தென்றிசை மருங்கிற் சென்று திரையுடுத்த
மணி பல்லவத்திடை"

197. E. B. Cowell, *Op. cit.* Vol. IV Story No. 480, pp. 148-51

198. *Ibid.* Vol. II, Story No. 196, pp. 89-90

Jātaka[199]). The *Akitta Jātaka* provides adequate ground to identify Maṇipallavam with the present isle of Kārai in Jaffna. There is also proof to show that the isle of Kārai was considered a sacred place to the Buddhists and that Kāvirippaṭṭinam from olden days had some connection with Maṇipallavam. The fact that the Jātaka story mentions Kāvirippaṭṭinam shows that its history could be traced from days as far back as those of the Jātakas.

4. *The Buddha seat at Maṇipallavam.*

We know from the *Maṇimēkhalai* that Maṇimēkhalai came to know of her previous birth from this Buddha seat at Maṇipallavam. The history of this seat is found in Canto IX[200] of the *Maṇimēkhalai* where it is said that two kings of Nāganāḍu quarrelled with each other to take possession of the seat when Lord Buddha appeared before them, occupied the seat and preached them the Dharma and brought about a reconciliation between the two kings. The same story about the Buddha seat with slight alterations is narrated even in the *Mahāvamśa* and that stroy also seems to have been taken from the *Jātaka stories.*

5. *The Number 'Seven'*

Number 'seven' seems to be a very auspicious number to the Buddhists and in the *Jātakas* we see the number seven being used very frequently. The *Maṇimēkhalai* also has got numerous references to number seven and the author attaches some importance to this number. For instance in Canto XXIX is stated that a merchant who was caught in a shipwreck was struggling in the sea continuously for seven days[201], in Canto XXVIII we see again

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199. *Ibid.* Vol III. Story No. 360, p. 124

200. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto IX lines 52–63.

201. *Ibid*, Canto XXIX line 19.
"எழுநாளெல்லை யிடுக்கண் வந்தெய்தா"

the number seven; a merchant, ancestor of Kōvalan distributed all his wealth in charity in seven days and renounced wordly life.[202] Again in Canto VII the Maṇimēkhalai deity appears before Śutamati and says that Maṇimēkhalai has been left in the island of Maṇipallavam and will return to Puhār after seven days.[203] Again in the same canto towards the end, a divine statue Kandir Pāvai gives the same information to Sutamati that Maṇimēkhalai will come there after seven days after knowing all that happened in her own life and Sutamati's life.[204] So also in the *Jātakas* we very frequently come across this number seven, vide Jātaka story numbers 532 and 534[205], 439[206], 547[207] etc. Thus the number 7 is considered to be a very auspicious one by the Buddhists and in this respect there is perfect agreement between the *Jātakas* and the *Maṇimēkhalai*.[208]

6. *Serving betel leaves after food.*

In Canto XXVIII it is said that Maṇimēkhalai when she met Aṛavaṇa aḍigaḷ at Kāñchī, prostrated before him, provided

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202. *Ibid*, Canto XXVIII, line 129.
"எழுநாளெல்லையுள் இரவலர்க்கீத்துத்
தொழுதவம் புரிந்தேன்"

203. *Ibid*, Canto VII, lines 24–25.
"இன்றேழ்நாளிலிந்நகர் மருங்கே
வந்துதோன்று மடக்கொடி நல்லாள்"

204. *Ibid*. Canto VII, lines 106–108.
"இன்றேழ்நாள் இடையிருள்யாமத்துத்
தன்பிறப்பதனொடு நின்பிறப்புணர்ந்திங்
கிலக்குமியாகிய நினை நினக்கிளையாள் வரும்"

205. E. B. Cowell *op. cit.* Vol. V, pp. 167 and 187.

206. *Ibid*, Vol. IV, p. 2

207. *Ibid*, Vol. VI, p. 256 and 261.

208. It is significant to note that the *Kuṛaḷ* also attaches some significance to this number seven and reference may be made in this connection to *Kuṛaḷ* verses 1269 and 1278.

him with delicious food and drink and afterwards served betel leaves and camphor.[209] It seems that it was the custom among the Buddhists to offer betel leaves and camphor after food and similar instances we also get from the *Jātaka stories*. The *Mahāsilva Jātaka* refers to the offering of fragrant betel leaves to a Budhisattva who is born as a king[210] and the *Aṇḍabhūta Jātaka* also refers to the same custom.[211]

7. *Religious disputation by Bhikkunis.*

We know from the *Maṇimēkhalai* that *Maṇimēkhalai* held religious discussions with the representatives of various religious sects at Vañji to know the ultimate truth in every religion. We also know that Kuṇḍalakēśi, after joining the Buddhist Saṅgha held disputation with the followers of other religions, and vanquished them and established the superiority of her own religion, Buddhism. We know from the *Kuṇḍalakēśi* that a custom was prevalent in those days to plant the branch of a Jambu tree at a particular place and call upon the votaries of other religions for purposes of debate and discussion. The person who came forth and plucked away the branch of that tree and trampled it under his foot was considered to be equal to the task of entering into a disputation and the debate was held with such persons.[212] We get an exactly similar incident in the *Jātakas* also and the incident described above seems to be an usual custom among the Buddhists of Western India also. The *Culla Kāliṅga Jātaka* narrates the story of the two sisters who took in their hands a branch of a rose apple tree and in the course of their wanderings from city to city for purposes of

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209. *Maṇimēkhalai*, Canto XXVIII, line 243.
"பாசிலைத்திரையனும் பறிதழும் படைத்து"

210 E. B. Cowell, *op.cit*. Vol. I Story No. 51, p. 132.

211. *Ibid*. Vol. I. Story No. 62, p. 151.

212. *Nīlakēśi*, Kuṇḍalakēśi vāda Sarukkam, lines 164–74.

disputation at last reached Śāvatti. They planted the rose apple branch at the city gate and called upon the person who is equal to enter into disputation with them to come and trample under his foot that branch.[213] This custom of opening up religious discussions as described in the Tamil works bears a very close resemblance to a similar custom mentioned in the *Jātakas*.

8. Moreover such occurrences as the Bauddha ascetics who had attained *siddhi* flying in the air are often mentioned in the *Jātakas*. The *Dādhivāhana Jātaka* makes one such reference to a Bodhisattva rising up in the air and flying.[214] In the *Saṁkappa Jātaka*, there is a similar reference to a Bodhisattva passing through the air.[215] In the *Maṇimēkhalai* also we get numerous instances like this. From the *Maṇimēkhalai* we know that the **Buddhist** ascetics generally lived in gardens in the outskirts of the towns or in woods and topes in out of the way places. That such solitary places in gardens and topes outside the town were usually the places of residence of the Buddhist monks has been referred to in the *Jātakas* also, for example, the *Mahājanaka Jātaka*.[216]

Apart from all these similarities, the birth stories of the Buddha's previous existence as mentioned in the *Maṇimēkhalai* are found largely corroborated by similar stories occurring in the *Jātakas* and from the above account it is evident that the incidents described in the *Maṇimēkhalai* are largely based upon the *Jātaka stories* and from that we should not rush to the conclusion that the *Maṇimēkhalai* incidents are purely imaginary

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213. E. B. Cowell, *op. cit* Vol. III, Story No. 301, p. 1.

214. *Ibid.* Vol. II Story No. 186, pp. 70–71.

215. *Ibid.* Vol. II, Story No. 251, p. 191

216. *Ibid.* Vol. VI, Story No. 539, p. 37.

with no tinge of reality. One thing is certain that Šāttanār, when writing this epic must have been largely influenced by the *Jātaka stories* and that during the age of this epic the *Jātaka stories* must have become popular in the Tamil country.

Closing the detailed examination of the epic *Maṇimēkhala* so far made, it may be said that the first three centuries of the Christian era saw the gradual development in the Tamil country of the new religions viz. Buddhism and Jainism which with their simple moral code devoid of complex modes of worship and elaborate rituals and ceremonies appealed to the Tamil people and took deep roots in the South Indian soil. As in the north of India, so in the south, the non-Āryan races began to cultivate a contempt for the Brāhmins whose modes of worship and ceremonial and notions of caste did not find favour with the natives. It was at this juncture that the heterodox sects of Buddhism and Jainism entered the country and no wonder that these with their less complex forms of worship and embodying in their doctrines some of the highest and noblest principles of human conduct found a congenial home among the Tamil people who not only tolerated them in their midst but even accorded to them a position of great honour and trust.

It may be mentioned in passing here that this age was one that witnessed the growth of classical Tamil literature rightly styled as the Augustan Age which produced a bumper crop of Tamil poetical works. These two new religions viz. Buddhism and Jainism have made very solid contributions to Tamil literature. As a matter of fact this was the period which witnessed the predominance of the Jains in intellect and learning though not in political power as Dr. Smith has observed. The Jains developed a love for the regional languages and began to foster them by writing books, and preaching their doctrines in those languages. Thus by the encouragement of the local vernaculars, out of opposition to the Brāhmins, they incidentally

helped themselves by making use of them as media to propagate their faith among the people. This to a large measure accounts for the success of the Jains in attaining popularity among the Tamil people. Likewise the Bauddhas were also not indifferent to the cultivation of Tamil and made important contributions to that language. It would be a matter for fruitful speculation to inquire what would have been the trend of Tamil literature but for the advent of the Jains and Buddhists in the Tamil country, more particularly the former. Probably we would never have had the masterpieces in Tamil literature like *Silappadikāram*, *Maṇimēkhalai*, *Chintāmaṇi* and *Kuṇḍalakēśi*.

The Buddhists wherever they went devoted their primary attention to the cultivation of the local vernaculars which they utilised as a vehicle to convey to the masses the message of their creed for they knew well that their appeal would grip popular imagination only if they do it through a popular language easily intelligible to the masses, unlike the Brāhmins who wrote their sacred books in a language unintelligible to a majority of the people and also kept them a sealed book to the masses. Unlike the Hindus the Buddhists prescribed no conditions of caste for joining the order or reading the scriptures and threw them open to all irrespective of caste, creed or sex provided they were prepared to undergo a prescribed code of moral conduct. This broad minded teaching of the Buddha, which thoroughly denounced all distinctions in the name of caste and which secured for human beings social equality very easily gained favour with the Tamils who had no notions of caste. This was one important reason for the popularity of Buddhism in the Tamil country Further the contribution of the humanitarian work done by the Buddhist morks for the success of Buddhism in the Tamil Country cannot be lost sight of. These monks wherever they spread their teaching had as their aim the enlisting of the patronage and support of the kings, chieftains, merchants and rich people and they succeeded in a vrey

large measure in their mission. Out of the funds that they so collected they maintained the Sanghas, organised educational institutions[217] providing education in Buddha Dharma and above all afforded all amenities for the poor people and supplied medical aid to human beings and animals. Such philanthropic activities of the Buddhist monks easily won for them a large number of followers. Thus side by side with propagating their doctrines the Buddhist priests also laboured for the welfare of the masses in various directions and this endeared them to all alike, consequent on which the knockers at the door increased in number.

That there were famous exponents of the Mahayāna school of Buddhism in the Tamil country in the 3rd and 4th centuries A. D. is evident from the fact that in the 4th century, during the reign of the Ceylonese ruler Gothābhaya (300–322 A. D.) when the rivalry between the Hinayānists and Mahayānists became acute, a Mahayāna devotee from the chola country by name Sangamitta came to Ceylon to stem the tide of opposition to Mahayāna.[218]

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217. Education in those days was imparted to pupils in the monastery itself which was called 'Paḷḷi' and there were no separate institutions for that specific purpose. Monasteries in those days were cultural centres both for the monks and the laity and were helpful for the spread of learning. This custom was later given rise to the naming of any place where education is imparted as 'paḷḷi' and that is why in our days. We call educational institutions as 'paḷḷikūḍam' (பள்ளிக்கூடம்). This term is of Buddhist origin.

218. Dr. K. K. Pillay. South India and Ceylon P.172.f. n.

CHAPTER 3

Buddhism under the Early Pallavas and the Kalabhras

This period in the history of Buddhism is considered to be a veritable dark age since the materials available are so scanty that it is difficult to construct a fairly certain history of the Tamil country. This was the age when the Pallavas had gradually penetrated into the Tamil country and had established just then their sway in the Kāñchī region and the earliest of the Pallava charters would testify to this. This was again the period when practically the whole of South India was overrun by a class of people known to history as the Kaḷabhras who greatly disturbed the existing political and social conditions and created much confusion in the south. Hence they are roundly abused as Kali kings in a Pāṇḍyan charter. However, their supremacy over the Tamil country seems to have been favourable to Buddhism.

The religious history of this period is obscure but yet with the help of the earliest Pallava charters and what they say about the early Pallava kings we may attempt to have a glimpse at the fortunes of Buddhism during this age-called an age of transition from the conditions refelected in the Saṇgam Literature to those of the three centuries commencing with the 7th. It was during the 7th century A. D. that the Pallavas and the Pāṇḍyas rose from their deep slumber after a period of temporary eclipse brought about by the invasion of the Kaḷabhras who were responsible for much political and social unsettlement in the

Tamil country. We have absolutely no evidence to ascertain when and how the age of the Śaṅgam came to a close and so far as available evidence goes it may be suggested that the Śaṅgam Age lasted upto the middle of the 3rd century A. D. or perhaps a little later, and we are again able to know something definite and authentic about the Tamil country only at the end of the 6th or towards the commencement of the 7th century A. D. and it is this intervening period of three centuries or more that we have to take up for study now. No doubt this was the age when the Pallavas had made their appearance on the Tamil soil and even the various sources of contemporary Pallava history seem to throw little light on the history of the far south. Even literary sources are totally absent in striking contrast to the previous age which produced an abundance of trustworthy literary works. Despite these handicaps it is possible to trace in broad outlines the trend of the political and religious history of this period.

Several scholars have written about the Pallavas, their origin and their chronology but the last word on the subject has not been said yet. It is disputed whether they were a tribe, a clan or a dynasty. From the existing state of their history it is safe to say that they were not a nation like the Āndhras but a dynasty of kings who succeeded the Āndhra dynasty and ruled Āndhradesa and later on even considerable portions of the Tamil country. The theory of Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar that the Pallavas were indigenous to South India but foreign to the Tamil country a dynasty of the Āndhras probably related to or springing out of clan of Śāthavāhanas is the most appealing. Whatever may be the theory regarding the origin of these Pallavas, one thing is certain that they were not natives to the Tamil soil and when they came and settled in the Tamil country we see them as the patrons of Sanskrit and the Northern culture associated with it and from the day they appeared in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam the hostilities between them and the other great dynasties of the south commence and Buddhavarman, an early

Pallava king is described as the "submarine fire to the ocean like army of the Chōḷas" and these wars continue with the Chōḷas, Pāṇḍyas and Chāḷukyas.

Many facts connected with the history of the early Pallavas are still shrouded in obscurity. The sources for their history are their own inscriptions and we are entirely dependent on them until about the 7th century A. D. When we land on more firm grounds of their history. But the materials supplied by these incription would in no way help us in constructing a complete picture of the political, social and religious conditions of the times, for these records are in the nature of mere grants announcing certain donations to individuals or institutions and thus devoid of any detailed information relating to the political conditions of the land, but abound in names of a long list of kings and queens who were donors themselves or related somehow to the donors. At best with the help of these charters we could construct a geneological list. Such being the limitations under which a student of history has to use these materials he has to be particularly careful in giving a proper interpretation to these inscriptions.

The Pallava history may be divided into four separate periods extending from about the 4th century A. D. to the 9th century A. D. and they are (1) The period of the Prākṛit charters (2) the period of the Sanskrit charters (3) the period of the stone inscriptions when the Simhavishṇu line was predominant and lastly (4) the period when Nandivarman's line was powerful until it was rooted out by the Chōḷas[1]. In the present context, we may confine ourselves to the first two periods. The first group, the earliest is so called because the kings of that group issued their copper place grants in

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1. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. II, p. 506.

Prākṛit. It is not possible to fix the date of these grants as they do not provide us any clue as to when they were written but on palaeographical grounds these Prākṛit records are placed in the 3rd and 4th centuries A. D. These Prākṛit charters are three in number viz. (1) The Mayidavōlu copper plates[2] of Yuvamahārāja Śivaskandavarman (2) The Hirahaḍagalli plates of Mahārājādhirāja Śivaskandavarman and (3) The British Museum Plates of Queen Chārudēvī.

The first viz. the *Mayidavōlu grant* (Guntur district) is issued from Kāñchīpura by Śivaskandavarman who is styled here Yuvamahārāja (heir-apparent) in the 10th year of his father's reign whose name is not given and this record makes a grant of the village named Viripāra to two Brāhmins. The second, the *Hirahaḍagalli grant* (Bellary district) consists of eight plates and is written in a Prākṛit dialect which comes close to the literary Pāli. This record is issued from kāñchī by Śivaskandavarman who now assumes the title Mahārājādhirāja in his 8th regnal year and addressed to the provincial viceroy at Amarāvathī; and this grant confirms and enlarges a donation made formerly by the grant king, the Lord Bappa[5]

2. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. VI, p. 84
3. *Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 2
4. *Ibid.* Vol. VIII, p. 143
5. Some scholars regard this term as denoting the father and predecessor of Śivaskandavarman and there are certain others who think that it does not denote any particular individual but a general honorofic title used by religious teachers and preceptors. For a detailed information on the problem of the identification of the first Pallava ruler of Kāñchī, see B. V. Krishna Rao, *Early Dynasties of Āndhra dēsa*, pp. 178–80 and R. Gopalan: *Pallavas of Kāñchi*, pp. 50–51.

to certain Brāhmaṇs who resided at Apitti. Besides recording the details regarding the donation the grant mentions the fact that the king performed the Aśvamedha Agnishtoma and Vājapeya sacrifices. The historical information which the grant conveys is very scanty and from our point of view not very helpful.

The third grant viz. the *Guṇapadēya plates* (Nellore district) known to the epigraphists as the British Museum Plates of Chārudēvī[6] belongs to the regin of Mahārāja Vijayaskanda-varman but is not dated. It contains an order by Chārudevī, wife of the heir-apparent Yuvamahārāja Sri Vijaya Buddha-varman and mother of the prince Buddhayāṅkura, of a gift of land to the temple of Nārāyaṇa at Dalura.

Now coming to a detailed examination of the important Prāhṛit inscription viz., the British Museum Plates of Chārudēvī, it mentions the name of a king Vijayaskandavarman and the nature of his relationship with the Śkandavarman of the previous records is difficult to find out, but some scholars have attempted to identify Śivaskandavarman of the first two records with Vijayaskandavarman of the British Museum records on the ground that the terms Śiva and Vijaya seem to be mere honorific prefixes too insignificant to matter much. This identification is strengthened by the fact that there is close similarity between the palaegoraphy of the Hirahaḍagalli and the British Museum plates. The British Museum plates further mention Vijaya Buddhavarman as the heir-apparent and Chārudevī as his queen and also mention a prince by name Buddhayāṅkura (literally the off spring of the Buddha). From these plates and early Sanskrit charters it appears that Vijayaskandavarman had two sons Vijaya Buddhavarman and Vīravarman, perhaps the former

6. The original copper plates which were secured by Sir Walter Ellcot are now in the British Museum.

was the elder one. We do not know anything about the reign of Buddhayāṅkura, who succeeded Vijaya Buddha Varman, and the next Pallava king about whom we know something definite is Vishṇugopa belonging to the peried of Sanskrit charters and a contemporary of Samudragupta.

Vijayaskandavarman's reign seems to mark the beginning of the period of the Sanskrit charters and it is now that we come to the second epoch in Pallava history, already referred to viz. the epoch of the kings of the Sanskrit charters. The charters belonging to this period are exclusively written in Sanskrit and therefore belong to a date later than the Prākṛit records. This period of Sanskrit charters extends from the middle of the 4th to the 7th century A. D. and the important inscriptions that fall in this group are the Omgōdu grant (I set), the Darsi fragment, the Uruvapaḷḷi, Omgōḍu (II set), Pikira, Maṅgalūr, Viḷāveṭṭi, Udayēndiram and Sēndalūr copper plate grants. There is also another group of inscriptions consisting of charters written partly in Sanskrit and partly in Tamil in a different style belonging to the 7th centuries A. D. and after and ranging over a period of three centuries. The most important of them are the Vayalūr Pillar Inscription of Narasimhavarman II,[7] the Kāśakuḍi[8] and the Vēlūrpāḷayam[9] grants of Vijayanandi-varman II.

Now let us proceed to examine in the light of available data regarding the different kings belonging to these two broad periods of Prākṛit and Sanskrit charters and their rule in Kāñchī, the position occupied by Buddhism in the Tamil country during these periods and also the attitude of these early Pallava monarchs towards this religion. But in view

7. *Epigraphia Indica,* Vol. XVIII, p. 145.

8. *South Indian Inscriptions,* Vol II Part III, p. 342.

9. *Ibid,* Part V, pp. 501–518.

of the meagreness of the sources and their uncertain nature it is difficult to utter the last word on the subject but some tentative conclusions may be arrived at.

It is a generally accepted view that the Pallavas were patrons of Northern culture and encouraged the growth of Sanskrit in the south. But it was not always the Vēdic religion and the culture associated with it that came under the fostering care of the Pallavas. No doubt names of Pallava kings like Śivaskandavarman, Kumāravishṇu, Vishṇugōpavarman, Simhavishṇu, Mahēndravarman etc. may lead us to believe that the Pallava kings were generally followers of either Śaivism or Vaishṇavism. But evidences in support of the view that some of the early Pallava kings were also patrons of Buddhism are not wanting and we may cite here a few of them.

A careful peep into the ancient history of Kāñchī would reveal to us that city had always been a great seat of learning where men of different religious persuasions and schools of different systems of philosophies had dwelt. Śaivism, Vaishṇavism, Buddhism and Jainism, each in its turn had powerful hold on that city. From the account of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang we learn that the Buddha used to pay visits to this city for the purpose of making conversions. The same source gives us the information that Aśōka Rāja had built stūpas there. The former statement is not grounded on solid acts since we know that Buddhism did not make any progress beyond certain portions of Eastern India during the life time of the Buddha. It is not improbable that Aśōka erected stūpas in the city of Kanchi and this presumption gains strength not only by the discovery of Aśoka s inscriptions as far south as Siddhāpura in the Mysore State but also by the fact that his inscriptions mention the Chōḷas, the Pāṇḍyas and the Kēraḷaputras. The *Maṇimēkhalai* testifies to the fact that there were a number of saṅghārāmas and Buddhist stūpas in Kāñchī.

These Buddhist monuments referred to by Hiuen Tsang and the *Maṇimēkhalai* were probably built by the early Chōḷa and Pallava monarchs. The history of Kāñchī for the period after Karikāla till the advent of the Pallava kings like Śivaskandavarman is very obscure and probably Kāñchi was under the sway of Chōḷa princes and viceroys who are mentioned in the *Maṇimēkhalai* as having built stūpas and chaityas. The Pallavas when they came to occupy Kāñchī seem to have continued the tradition of the earlier rulers and were favourably disposed towards Buddhism. The very fact that some of the early Pallava kings assumed names like Buddhavarman and Aśōkavarman shows their leanings towards Buddhism. For example the Vayalūr Pillar inscription of Narasimhavarman II which gives an exhaustive genealogical list of the early Pallava kings begins with an account of the mythological origin of the Pallavas and mentions among others the names like Aśōkavarman and Buddhavarman.[10] Again the Vēlūrpaḷayam copper plate grant of Vijayanandivarman III when tracing the traditional history of the Pallava family mentions Aśōkavarman as born in the lineage of Prince Pallava, the progenitor of the family after whom the family was so named.[11] Further we have the well known British Museum plates of Queen Chārudēvī which give the names Vijaya Buddhavarman and Buddhayāṅkura, the latter literally meaning offspring of the Buddha. Perhaps the child was born as a result of special prayers to the Buddha or by the grace of the Buddha. Though the bull emblem adopted by the Pallava might be an indication of their leanings towards Śaivism yet a study of their history and particularly the above mentioned facts will clearly show that they were very tolerant in religious matters. As is generally accepted the Pallavas were Āndhra feudatories who had originally established their sway in Āndhra desa and rose to

10. *Epigraphia Indica*. Vol. XVIII, p. 151.

11. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. II part v. pp. 501–517

prominence towards the close of the 3rd century A. D. on the decline of the Śāthavāhana power and conquered the Kāñchī region. At first during their stay in the Āndhra deśa where Buddhism was in a predominant position naturally they yielded to the influence of that religion and actively supported it, thus following in the foot steps of their overlords and no wonder a few of them continued to be votaries of the same faith when they declared their independence and founded their own rule in the south. Curiously enough the first charters they issued were in Prākṛit, as we have already noticed and it is significant to note that their Āndhra overlords were adopting Prākṛit as their court language. The large use of Pṛākṛit in the inscriptions of the early Pallava kings may, as Mr. Vekayya suggests, be due to the influence of Buddhism[12] and Prof. Buhler has shown that the Prākṭit of the Pallava grants comes close to the literary Pāli, a circumstance which has some significance when tracing the history of the literature of southern Buddhists.[13] But later on after conquering Kāñchī they probably realised that city was a centre of Sanskrit learning and began to issue charters in Sanskrit.

Apart from this, evidence of a more positive nature may be brought out to show that some of the early Pallava kings were very well disposed towards Buddhism and a careful consideration of these facts would reveal the partiality of a few sovereigns for Buddhism in those days. A stone inscription of Simhavarman II of the Pallava dynasty found at Amarāvathī[14] opens with an invocation to the Lord Buddha[15] and contains a mythical

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12. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I, p.2

13. *J. R. A. S.* 1889, p. 1123

14. *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. I, No. 32, pp. 25–28

15. The invocation runs thus:

"May the dust of the glorious feet of Bhavadvīsh (meaning meanin the enemy of wordly existence), which thickly

geneaology of the Pallava dynasty. This monarch is called the worshipper of Buddha in this record. Curiously enough the inscription begins from the bottom and should be read upwards. It consists of eleven complete verses and of a prose passage. From the incomplete prose passage at the end of the inscription we learn that Simhavarman on his return from an expedition to the north, performed a pilgrimage to a place called Dhānyaghaṭā (line.38) or Dhānyagaṭaka (line 47), a place sacred to the Buddha; and there, having worshipped the lord made a donation and set up the statue of the Buddha and heard these words from the Buddha: "Well, well lay worshipper Simhavarman."[16] Dhānyagaṭaka is evidently identical with the well known town of Amarāvathī.

Again it is said that a certain Pallava king espoused the cause of an exiled Buddhist king of Ceylon. This Pallava king

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covers the multitude of brilliant crest jewels of the lords of Gods and of demons, for a long time show you (the way to) supreme glory!'' The prose passage at the end shows that Buddha is meant by the expreseion 'Bhavadvīsh'.

16. The inscription ends thus: The king is described as returning from a North Indian expedition. "Then having crossed Bāhirathī (Gṅgā) the Gōdāvarī and the Krishṇa-venā (Krishṇā) he perceived (a place sacred to) the lord Vitaraga (Buddha) named the illustrious town of Dhānyaghaṭa. Having regarded it with curiosity and having humbly approached and saluted the tutelar deities, which were charged with protection of the whole sacred place (Kshētra), he listened to a discoures on the law...... in a secluded spot. Having heard it he saluted the highest born...and spoke thus: "I also, O Lord! (shall erect a statue) of the lord at this very place, ornamented with jewels, gold and silver". After he had thus spoken the lord said: "Well, well lay worshipper Simhavarman. Here

is none other than Narasimhavarman I (Vātāpikoṇḍa)[17] and this fact receives confirmation from the evidence of the *Mahāvamśa* according to which Mānāvamma the son of Kasappa II, ruler of Ceylon, having been exiled while very young went over to India with his wife Śaṅkā and took up service under Narasimha. At the time of his stay a certain Vallabha invaded the Pallava land and Mānavamma utilised this opportunity to show his valour and high talents in war and the devotion and attachment which he had for his benefactor. With his able assistance, Narasimha-varman was able to rout out his adversary in the battle. The Pallava king was so pleased at his conduct that he offered to render assistance and placed at the disposal of Mānavamma a large army to enable him to restore his lost kingdom in Ceylon. His first invasion of Ceylon, was, however not successful when he was defeated by Dathōpatissa and had to return to his patron for more help. For a second time, he invaded Ceylon with fresh reinforcements, landed at a port in Jaffna, subdued the inhabitants of that place, proceeded towards Anurādhapura and raised the banner of imperial sovereignty all over Lanka[18]. A more concret evidence could be cited in support of the view that the early Pallavas were not altogether hostile to Buddhism. The Ceylonese chronicle *Mahāvamśa* contains an early reference to the Pallavas where they are reckoned as one of the important Buddhist powers in India at that period. The occasion is when the Ceylon ruler Duṭṭagīmani Abhaya (1st century (B. C) held a great congregation on the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the Mahāvihāra that he constructed; he issued invitations to all the leading Buddhists from the various Buddhist

(at) the place sacred to the highest Buddha ... then having saluted...in Dhānya Ghaṭaka.... (S. II. Vol. I, pp. 25–28.)

17. K. V. Subramaṇya Iyer: *Historical sketches of Ancient Dekhan*, p. 39

18. C. Rāśanāyagam: *Ancient Jaffna.* p. 234

centres of repute and among those who received such an invitation and from where a large number of Buddhist monks attended was Pallavabhogga[19]. No doubt this evidence is unambiguous but if only the identification of that territory mentioned in the *Mahāvamśa* with the Pallava region is valid, for, in view of the fact that the Pallavas as a ruling power were quite unknown to history in such an early age as that of Duṭṭagāmani Abhaya, Dr. S. K. Iyengar has expressed doubts regarding the identification of that territory with that of the Pallavas.[19a] This objection will lose much of its force, if we assume that the particular territory must have been occupied by the Pallavas at the time when their chronicles were written and it is probable that instead of referring to it by its original name, whatever it be, the chronicles might have used the name current during their age.

The cumulative significance of all these facts hither to discussed would be to strengthen the conclusion that the Pallavas of the early period were not generally hostile towards Buddhism, while particularly some kings of that dynasty were adherents to that religion.

From this we may draw the inference that Buddhism continued to flourish in the Kāñchi region during this period though more positive and direct evidence could not be brought, for this particular period so far treated, for, as stated at the outset the whole of the Tamil country in this period came under the sway of a set of invaders who are well known in history as the Kaḷabhras who seem to have been very favourably disposed towards Buddhism. This fact that in the period under question Tamil country as a whole was subjected to the rule of a class of people whose attitude towards Buddhism is said to have

19. *Mahāvamśa* – Turnour's translation, p. 171

19a. The same objection has been raised by Dr. K. K. Pillay also. See his *South India and Ceylon* P 51.

been friendly lends support to the view expressed above that Buddhism continued to be prosperous in the Tamil country. But this could be accepted only if satisfaetory proof is available to show that the Kaḷabhras were favourable to Buddhism, and here we may piece togetner all available evidence in favour of this opinion.

Kaḷabhras

The problem of the identification of these Kaḷabhras has not yet been satisfactorily settled and unanimous opinion on the subject is yet to come. These Kaḷabhras soon after the reign of the Pāṇḍyan king Mudukuḍumi invaded the Pāṇḍya country, subjugated that king and occupied that territory and subsequently extended their rule over the Chōḷa and the Chēra dominions conquering those kings. Thus in the latter half of the 5th century A. D. they became the supreme overlords of the whole of the whole of the Tamil country and thus upset the order of things long established, until at last Kaḍuṅkōn of the Pāṇḍyan line expelled these indvaders and restored his last kingdom.[19b]

19[b]. Dr. B. G. L. Swamy in a recent article on the Kaḷabhras rejects the traditional view that the Kaḷabhra sway extended over the whole of the Tamil country and that it lasted for about one and a half centuries. He is of the view that the Kaḷabhra interregnum lasted only for a couple of year during the period of Rajasimha I (8th century A. D.) and that only a very small part of the Tamil country was under their occupation the area between Karur and Tiruchi in the north down to Cholavandan, Tirumangalam and Madurai in the south. He also refutes the idea that the Kaḷabhra invasion upset the long established political social and religious order in the Tamil country. He identifies the Kaḷabhras with the western Ganges. Bulletin of the Institute of Traditional cultures, Madras 1976 (Jan. June) pp. 81-125.

The Kaḷabhra sovereignty over the south seems to have lasted for about one and half centuries and must have terminated about the commencement of the 7th century. The Pāṇḍyas under Kaḍuṅkōn were the first to recover from the blow and next to them came the Pallavas of the Simhavishṇu line and it took nearly three centuries for the Chōḷas to recover from the blow. Perhaps the rising tide of the Pāṇḍyas and the Pallavas must have acted as a powerful check in the quick resuscitation of their lost glory. The Śaṅgam works nowhere refer to the Kaḷabhras. The inscriptions of the Pallava kings Simhavishṇu[19c], Narasimhavarman I [20] and Nandivarman [21] mention the Kaḷabhras as their enemies and claim victories over them. Similarly the Western Chāḷukya kings Vikramāditya I, Vinayāditya and Vikramāditya II claim victories over them.[22] The most important reference to them is, however, in the Pāṇḍya charter viz. the Vēḷvikuḍi grant which simply records the regranting of the village of Vēḷvikuḍi to Nārchiṅgan, a member of the Brāhmaṇ family of Narkoṟṟam to whom the self same village was given as a gift by the Pāṇḍyan king Palyāgaśālai

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19c. The Kāśākuḍi Plates, *S. I. I.* Vol. II, part III p. 356, Verse 20.

The verse runs thus: "Thereafter came Simha (Vishṇu), the lion of the earth (Avanisimha), who was engaged in the destruction of enemies (and) who vanquished Malaya, Kaḷabhra, Māḷava, Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya (kings) the Simhaḷa (king) who was proud of the strength of arms and the Kēraḷas.''

20. Kuṟam Plates, *S. I. I.* Vol. p. 152. It states that he repeatedly defeated the Chōḷas, Kēraḷas, Kaḷabhras and Pāṇḍyas".

21. Koṟṟaṅguḍi Plates, *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society,* Vol. XIII (1921–22), pp. 304–06

22. See *Indian Antiquary,* Vol. IX, p. 129; Vol. VII, p. 303 and *Epigraphia Indica,* Vol. V. p. 204

Mudukuḍumi Peruvaḻudi. When the original gift was thus being enjoyed there appeared the Kalirāja called Kaḷabhra who had already driven out of their possessions innumerable ādhirājas and dispossessed this donee of his gift of the village. Then there appeared 'like the sun from out of the sea', (after a storm) a Pāṇdyādhiraja, the ruler of the south by name Kaḍuṅkōn who destroyed the kings and chiefs in due from and set up righteous rule'.[23]

On the strength of the suggestion of Mr. K. V. Lakshmaṇa Rao that the Kalikula occurring in the Koppāram Plates of Pulakesin II may possibly refer to the Kaḷabhras.[24] Mr. Krishṇa Śāstri is inclined to identify the Kaḷabhras with a dynasty called Kali [25] but we do not know so far of any such dynasty having

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23. *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol. XI (1920–21), pp. 81–83. The passage relating to the Kaḷabhra occupation runs thus:

"வேந்தன் அப்பொழுதய்
நீரோட்டிக் கொடுத்தமையால் நீடு புக்திதுத்தபின்
அளவரிய ஆதிராஜரை அகல நீக்கி அகலிடத்தை
களப்ரனென்னும் கலி அரசன் கைக்கொண்டதனை இறக்கியபின்
படுகடன்முளைத்த பருதிபோல் பாண்டியாதிராஜன்
வெளிப்பட்டு
விடுகதிரவிரொளி விசை வீற்றிருந்து..............
கோவும் குறும்பும் பாவுடன் முருக்கி
தரணி மங்கையைப்
பிறர் பாலுரிமை திறவி தினீக்கித்
தன்பாலுரிமை நன்கனமமைத்த..............
கடுங்கோனென்றும் கதிர் வேற்றென்னன்."

See *Annual Report on Epigraphy*, Madras for the year 1908 for Veṅkayya's remarks.

24. *Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute* Vol. IV, Part I, p. 53

25. *Epigraphia India*, Vol. XVII, p. 306, Footnote 2.

ruled anywhere in India. Mr. Veṅkayya in dealing with the Vēḷvikuḍi grant throws a suggestion identifying the Kaḷabhras with the Karnāṭakas referred to in the *Mūrtināyanārpurāṇam* of the *Periyapurāṇam* and the *Tiruviḷaiyāḍal*[26] where mention is made of a Karnāṭaka king of Jaina persuasions ruling in Madura which period corresponds to the rule of the Kaḷabhras in the Tamil country. It is clear from the *Periyapurāṇam* account that the Karnāṭakas occupied Madura and ruled from there. In history we do not know of any other occupation and rule of Madura than that of the Kaḷabhras and on this ground this identification and the equation of the Kaḷabhra interregnum of the Vēḷvikuḍi grant with the Carnatic rule of Madura in the days of Mūrtināyanār were holding the field till recently.[27] In tracing the fortunes of Buddhism in the Tamil country this identification is of some special interest and significance to us. Mr. T. A. Gopinātha Rao in a foot note to his edition of the Anbil plates of Sundara Chōḷa identifies the Kaḷabhras with the Muttaraiyars[28] and Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar also falls in line with him and equates them with the Kaḷavar or Kaḷvar of the region immediately north of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam[29] who belong to the same family as that of the Muttaraiyar. This territory north of Tirupathi upto the northern borders of the Pulicat lake is said to have been under the rule of a chieftain who is referred to in the Saṅgam works as Kaḷavar Kōmān Pulli. Though the actual reading in the Śaṅgam works in Kaḷvar, Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar on the authority of Mahāmahōpādhyāya Śwāminātha Iyer, the editor of a number of Śaṅgam works maintains that his own reading

26. *Annual Report on Epigraphy*, Madras, 1908, p. 53 See *Periyapurāṇam* Mūrtināyanār, Stanza. 11
27. *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol. XII (1921–22), pp. 304–06)
28. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XV, April 1919, p. 44–49
29. Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar, *Ancient India* (1941) p. 480. Also See Prof. R. Sathianatha Iyer, *A College Textbook of Indian History*, Vol. I (1945), p. 296.

'Kaḷavar' is more correct and justifiable[30] This Kaḻḻar or more properly the Kaḷavar migration from the territory mentioned above into the territory of Kāñchī and gradually into the Chōḷa dominions and ultimately into the Pāṇḍya country seems what is described in Sanskrit as the Kaḷabhra invasion and this was due to the gradual pressure of the Pallavas who ultimately took possession of Kāñchī.[31] But Mr. M. S. Rāmaswāmi Iyeṅgar subscribes to the view of Mr. Veṅkayya that they were Karnāṭakas and contends that the term Kaḷavar or Kaḷvar occurring in Śaṅgam works and in some inscriptions like the Śēndalai inscription as the titles borne by some Muttaraiyar chieftains indicates only the origin of the Kaḷabhras and that they assumed the title 'Muttaraiyar' which means 'lord of three lands' symbolic of their conquest of the three Tamil kingdoms.[32] Thus he says that the terms Kaḷavar and Muttaraiyar refer to their origin and title respectively and that they are not two different sets of people. Again Paṇḍiṭ M. Rāghava Iyeṅgar is not in favour of identifying them with either the Muttaraiyars or Kaḷvars[33] and he argues that from the Śēndalai inscription and the Vaikunthaperumāḷ temple inscription at Conjeevaram we come to know that the Muttaraiyars were on friendly terms with the Pallavas–a Muttaraiyar chieftain is honourably mentioned as one of the worthies who came to receive Nandivarman Pallavamalla at his installation–whereas the Koṟṟamaṅgalam plates of the same monarch refer to the Kaḷabhras as the enemies of the Pallava king who were subjugated by him. This is sufficient indication to consider that the Kaḷabhras

30. Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar, *Op. cit*, pp. 481–82

31. Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar: *Ancient India* (1941), p. 484

32. Mr. M. S. Rāmaswāmi Iyeṅgar: *Studies in South Indian Jainism*, p. 55

33. *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. VIII (1929), p. 75

are different from the Muttaraiyars.[33a] It may be argued that Kaḷabhra is a Sanskrit variation of the Tamil word Kaḷvar. If it were so the Tamil inscriptions would have called them in their pure form as 'Kaḷvars' and not in the corrupted Sanskrit form. On the other hand the inscriptions have carefully preserved the term Kaḷabhra and this shows that the Kaḷvars and the Kaḷabhras were two different people. Then the Paṇḍit proceeds to identify the Kaḷabhras with the Kaḷappāḷar, a well known dynasty of people who figured prominently in South Indian history and who belonged to the Veḷḷāḷa caste. He mentions two celebrated Kaḷappāḷar chiefs Kūṟṟuva Nāyanār and Achyuta Kaḷappāḷan. The former is referred to by Nambi Āṇḍār Nambi as

> "ஓதந்தழுவிய ஞாலமெல்லாம் ஒருகோலின் வைத்தான்
> கோதைநெடுவேற் களப்பாளனாகிய கூற்றுவனே"[34]

and that he was a great warrior who was victorious over the Tamil kings is testified to by Śēkkiḻār in his *Periyapurāṇam*. This Kūṟṟuva Nāyanār is considered to be none other than the 'Kaliarasan' of the Kaḷabhra family referred to in the Vēḷvikuḍi grant, which does not stand for a proper name in that context on the ground that 'Kūṟṟuvan' simply connotes the same idea as Kaliarasan.[35] The other chieftain mentioned is Achyuta Kaḷappāḷan who was also noted for his powers and valour and is reputed in literary tradition to have kept in confinement the three Tamil kings in the palace at Tillai (Chidambaram), his capital. There are five stanzas in the *Tamiḻ Nāvalar Charitai* which describe the songs sung by the three captive kings while in

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33a. Dr. T. V. Mahalingam identifies the Kaḷabhras with the Oḷiyar and T. N. Subramanian equates them with the Jainas who contributed to Tamil literature and tries to posit a connection between Vajraman a Jaina who established the Dravida Sangha in Madurai and the Kaḷabhras.

34. *Tiruttoṇḍar Tiruvandādi*.

35. *Journal of Indian History*, Vol. VIII (1929) pp. 77–78

prison at Tillai.[36] Here the Tamil kings who had been subjugated by Achyuta give vent to the greatness of the conquering king. Some songs about him are also quoted by Amritaśāgarar, the author of the Yāpparuṅgalakkārikai.[37] Therefoie the Kaliarasan of the Kaḷabhra family mentioned in the Vēḷvikuḍi grant must be either Kūṟṟuva Nāyanār or Achyuta. The *Yāpparuṅgala Kārikai* speaks in praise of Achyuta and a verse describes his greatness.[38]

It is interesting to note that a Buddhist writer by name Buddhadatta refers to a Kalamba ruler Acchuta Vikkanta ruling over the Chōḷa country from Kāviripaṭṭinam. Mr. Raṅgaswāmi Sarasvathi argues that this Kalamba could not be a reference to the well known Kadamba dynasty that was ruling only the north west of the Deccan with its capital at Banavāsi and that it unmistakably refers to the Kaḷabhras since they were the ruling power in the Chōḷa country at that time. He calls the dynasty 'Kalamba' while for the word 'Kalamba' the original Pāli texts give a different reading as Kaḷabbha which more approximates to the word 'Kaḷabhra' the latter being only the Sanskrit variant of the former. The variant reading Kalamba also as referring to the Kaḷabhras occurs in same of the inscriptions and in fact the alternative reading Kaḷabbha is found in the *Vinayavinicchaya*. And he proceeds to observe that the Pāli term Kaḷabbha becomes 'Kaḷappar' and 'Kaḷappālar' in Tamil as அந்தணர் = அந்தஞனர், அருவா = அருவாளர், வேள் = வேளாளர் etc. So the Achyuta Kaḷappāḷan referred to in the *Tami*

36. *Tamiḻ Nāvalar Charitai*, 154–57
37. *Yāpparuṅgalakkārikai*, p. 103
38. "அடுதிறல் ஒருவ நிற்பரவுதும் 'எங்கோன்
தொடுகழல் கொடும்பூண் பகட்டெழில்மார்பில்
கயலொடு கலந்த சிலையுடைக் கொடுவரிப்
புயலுகழ் தடக்கைப் போர்வேல் அச்சுதன்
தொன்றுமுதிர் கடலுகம் முழுதுடன்
ஒன்று புதிகிரி உருட்டுவோன்' எனவே"
(விளக்கத்தனர்)

Nāvalar Charitai is none other than the *Kaḷabbha Achyuta Vikranta* refferred to by Buddhadatta.[39] This Achyuta of the Kaḷabhra dynasty is regarded as a great patron of Buddhism in this part of the Tamil country.

In the writings of Buddhadatta we have singularly interesting evidence regarding Kaḷabhra rule in the Chōḷa country. Buddhadatta, a contemporary of Buddhagosha is said to have composed Bauddha works in the Chōḷa country. In the concluding lines of his *Abhidhammāvatāra* he says: "In the lovely kāvēripaṭṭana, crowded with hordes of men and women, not belonging to impure castes, endowed richly with all the requisites of a town, with crystal clear water flowing in the river, filled with all kinds of precious stones, possessed of many kinds of bazaars, beautified with many gardens, and in a beautiful and pleasant monastery adorned with a mansion as high as the peak of Kailāsa, built by Kanhadāsa ... ... while I was living in an old house there, by me, who am shining with qualitied, such as writing beautifully on good topics ... . this was composed and propounded extensively."[40] After closing the benedictory lines some later writer has added the colephon: This work named *Abhidhammāvatāra* was composed by Buddhadatta Āchāriya, inhabitant of Urugāpuram.

In the closing passage of the *Vinayavinicchaya* he says: "In the undisturbed town of Bhūtamaṅgala, containing all kinds of people which was the navel of the great Chōḷa kingdom, and filled with groves of plantains, salwood, palmyra and cocoanuts, shining with tanks densely covered with lotuses and lillies .... in the beautiful and pleasant monastery surrounded by well built outer walls and moat belonging to

39. *Quarterly Journal of the Mythic Society*, Vol. XV

40. *Abhidhammāvatāra*, *Slōkas* 1409–13. *Buddhadatta's Manuals* (Pāli Text Society) Parts I and II. See P. T. S. Iyeṅgar, *History of the Tamils*, pp 528–29.

Vēṇhudāsa, brilliant with vanira trees lining the banks of the river, rejoicing the mind with many gardens filled with different kinds of birds ...... by me who lived (there) in a mansion which clarifies the mind was composed in honour of Buddhasimha this compilation on the principles of Vinaya taught by Buddhasimha for the sake of my pupils and for the good of the Bhikkus who want to learn the Vinaya in a short time without difficulty. It was begun and finished during the reign of the blemishless Acchuta Vikkanta of the Kaḷabbha Kula."[41]

From the above two references we may infer that Kāvēri-paṭṭinam was a prosperous city when Buddhadatta lived and taught and that there were a number of monasteries built there by lay followers of Buddhism like Kanhadāsa and Veṇudāsa. Moreover the king who had eclipsed the Chōḷas and was ruling the Chōḷa country must have also been a Buddhist himself for the very fact that that ruler of the Kaḷabhra dynasty patronised a Buddhist monk of repute like Buddhadatta and enouraged the writing of Buddhist literary works and also favoured the building of monasteries all over the country goes to prove that he must have been a staunch Buddhist. Not only in big towns like Kāvēripaṭṭana were found monasteries but as is borne out by the above evidence even in interior places like Bhūtamaṅgala monasteries were to be found and this is an indication of the popularity of Buddhism in the Tamil country especially in the Chōḷa dominions during the rule of the Kaḷabhras. Among the many centres of Buddhist repute in the Tamil country *Maṇimēkhalai* does not mention Bhūtamaṅgala but subsequently under the Kaḷabhras that place is considered as a chief centre of Buddhism as is borne out by Buddhadatta's evidence. Again Tamil literary tradition says that this place was the scene of a religious disputation in which Śambandar the Śaiva saint, defeated the Buddhists which shows

41. *Vinaya Vinicchaya* – Slōkas 3168–3179. *Buddhadatta's Manuals*, Parts I and II.

that that place must have been a stronghold for the Buddhists. In the light of these facts it is reasonable to think that Bhūtamaṅgala became a reputed Buddhist centre in the days of the Kaḷabhras and continued to be so till the days of Sambandar. It may be mentioned that this Bhūtamaṅgala of Buddhadatta is nothing but the Bōdhimaṅgai mentioned in the *Periyapurāṇam*. This Bhūtamaṅgala is identified with the modern Būdalūr in the Tanjore district [41a] and the region immediately north of this village suits well with the description as given by Buddhadatta and as a confirmation of this in places round about this town, i. e. in the road which leads from Tanjore to Nāmakkal, numerous relics of the Baud.ha and Jaina cults have been unearthed. Prof. P. T. Śrīnivāsa Iyeṅgar is also in favour of identifying this Achyuta Vikranta of the Kaḷabhra dynasty with the Achyuta Kaḷappāḷan of the *Tamiḻ Nāval'r Charitai*. It is contended that a chieftain by name Kaḷappāḷan was living in a small town called Kaḷappāḷ in the Chōḷa country and that his descendants were known as Kaḷappāḷars and therefore the Kaḷabhras, who are reputed to have patronised the Northern culture and the Kaḷappāḷars who are purely Tamilians could not be equated.[42] Even if we accept the validity of this argument it may be stated that these Tamil chieftains became completely Aryanised and encouraged the North Indian cults like the Bauddha and Jaina since for centuries past the two cults had been making frantic efforts in securing more and more adherents to their creed and winning royal support in the Tamil country and especially from the time when the three old dynastics, patrons of the old order of things collapsed before the might of Achyuta, the new creeds dramatically captured the imagination of the Tamils and no wonder the Tamil chieftains also had fallen

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41a. This identification is not accepted by many. The alternative suggestion is that that place may be Bhūtankudi or Piḷḷai Pūthankudi near Pāpanāsam.

42. T. V. Sadāsiva Paṇḍārathār: Pāṇḍiyar Varalāṟu (Second Edn.) p. 34.

a prey to them. It is said in Tamil literary tradition that Kūṟṟuva Nāyanār; the Kaḷappāḷa chieftain gradually rose to so much power that he wanted to be crowned ruler of the whole of the Chōḷa kingdom in Chidambaram by the Brāhmin community of 3000 there. This may not serve as a valid objection to the theory that the Kaḷabhras who were friends of Buddhism were identical with the Kaḷappāḷars who had professed leanings towards Śaivism as is borne out by the above evidence,[43] for it is not improbable that the same monarch could have patronised the Bauddha and Jaina cults and at the same time got himself crowned at the Śiva temple at Tillai especially in the light of the fact that in those days there was little animosity amongst the different religions and the sectarian rivalry began to show its ugly head only from the 7th century onwards.

Thus the identification of Paṇḍiṭ Rāghava Iyeṅgar that the Kaḷabhras are the Kaḷappāḷars, is very much helpful from our point of view in tracing the fortunes of Buddhism in the Tamil country in so far as rulers of the Kaḷabhra clan like Achyuta Vikkanta have definitely extended their support to the religion by patronising reputed Buddhist scholars and encouraging the building of monasteries everywhere. Similarly the identification of Mr. Veṅkayya that the Kaḷabhras were the Karnāṭakas though not tenable, is valuable from the point of view of the history of Buddhism in the Tamil country as mentioned above. The Vēḷvikuḍi grant says that the Kaḷabhras invaded the Pāṇḍya country, defeated Pāṇḍya ruler and occupied Madura and this epigraphical evidence receives corroboration from the *Periyapurāṇam*. It is stated there that Madura was invaded and occupied by the king of

43. It is also worth noting here that Achyuta Kaḷappāḷar, the renowned Kaḷappāḷa chieftain is the father of Meykkaṇḍa dēva the founder of modern Tamil Śaivism in the 13th century A. D.

Karnāṭa during the time of the Saiva devotee Mūrti Nāyanār.[44] In history we do not know of any other occupation of Madura than that of the Kaḷabhras and therefore the Karnāṭaka occupation of Madura adverted to in the *Periyapuraāṇm* is considered to be none other than the Kaḷabhra occupation of Madura described in the Vēḷvikuḍi grant. More interesting is the information furnished by the same *Periya purāṇa n* that the Karnāṭakas who occupied Madura were hostile to the orthodox religions and as soon as they commenced their rule they disregarded the worship of Hindu Gods, adopted a policy of persecution of the Vaidika sects and gave active support to the Avaidika religions like Jainism and Buddhism.[45] The same information is also furnished in the Tamil work *Kallāḍam* and it says that the Karnāṭaka king who occupied Madura became

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44. "கானக்கடி சூழ்வடுகக் கருநாடர் காவன்
மானப்படை மன்னன் வலிந்து நிலங் கொள்வானாய்
யானைக்குதிரைக் கருவிப்படை வீரர் திண்டேர்
சேனைக் கடலுங் கொடு தென்றிசை நோக்கி வந்தான்"

"வந்துற்ற பெரும்படை மண்புதையப்பரப்பிச்
சந்தப்பொதியில் தமிழ்நாடுடை மன்னன் வீரம்
சிந்திச் செருவென்று தன்னாணை செலுத்தும் ஆற்றாம்
கந்தப் பொழில் சூழ் மதுராபுரி காவல் கொண்டான்"
— பெரியபுராணம், மூர்த்திநாயனார் புராணம்,
verses 11–12

45. "துன்றுசேனை யிற்றுளங்கியவொரு கருநாட
மன்னனன்ன நான் வந்தருட்டெல்லினை யோட்டி
கன்னிமண்டலங் கொண்ட மங்கையர் கைவிழுந்து
முன்னநீடிய வைதி கமுறையையு மொழித்தான்"
—நம்பித்திருவிளையாடற் புராணம்

T..V. Sadāśiva Paṇḍārathār: *Sen Tamil*, Vol. XXXII (1934–35), p. 286.

a Jaina and persecuted Śaivas[46]. The story goes that he died without issue and the choice of succession was left to an elephant which was let loose for the purpose. The elephant picked up Mūrti Nāyanār and he accordingly became king of Maḍura.[47] Thus it is evident from the facts mentioned above that the Kaḷabhra rulers of Madura were staunch supporters of the two heterodox religions Buddhism and Jainism. It is also stated that these Kaḷabhra patronised and advcated Prākṛit and Pāli languages as their official language to the exclusion of Tamil and some Prākṛit and Pāli literary works belonging to this period have been brought to light and this further lends support to the view that the Kaḷabhras must have been Buddhists. The Kaḷabhra rule in the Tamil country lasted for nearly about two centuries from the latter half of the 5th century to the 7th century, when Kaḍuṅkōn of the Pāṇḍya line and Simhavishṇu of the Pallava line mustered their strength and jointly or independently conquered the Kaḷabhras and re-asserted their lost supremacy. The two centuries of Kaḷabhra rule thus must have contributed a good deal to the progiess that Buddhism made in the Tamil country. Already as evidenced by the *Maṇimēkhalai* Buddhism was popular among the Tamil people and royal support was not altogether absent. The atmosphere also was very congenial for propaganda since the Tamil monarchs had even been tolerant permitting these religions also to flourish side by side with the religions of the land. Addded to this advantage, the rulers themselves were Buddhists so much so royal support was forthcoming in a

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46. "படைநான்குடன்று பஞ்சவன் துரந்து
மதுரை வவ்வியம்மை நடர்வேந்தன்
அருகர்ச் சார்ந்துநின்று அரண்பணியடைப்ப"
—கல்லாடம் 56.

T. V. Sadāśiva Paṇḍārathār: *Pāṇḍiyar Varalāṛu,* Second Edition, p. 35.

47. Gazetteer of the Tinnevelly District, p. 45.

greater measure than ever before, We know that the Kaḷabhras were practically holding their sway over the whole of the Tamil country for about two centuries and during this period Buddhism must have reached the highest point of eminence throughout the Tamil country, thanks to the active pro-Buddhist policy of the Kaḷabhra rulers. The Vaidika sects like Saivism and Vaishṇavism found in the discomfiture of the three Tamil monarchs, who hitherto served as a tower of strength and source of help, at the hands of the invaders an irreparable loss for their cause and deprived of their primary source of help the Vaidika sects lost their hold on the masses and at this psychological moment the Buddhists, assured of royal patronage, made an all out effort to enlist as much support as possible from the public and there is no wonder that the Buddhists were successful in their mission. The Vaidika sects were now relegated to the background and Buddhism and Jainism came to the forefront but this state of affairs was not to last long. The Vaidika religions suffered a temporary eclipse until Kaḍuṅkōn of the Pāṇḍya line and Simhavishṇu of the Pallava line appeared on the scene as the victors over the Kaḷabhras and re-conquered their kingdom from the invaders and restored the Vaidika religions to their original status. Buddhism had taken such deep roots in the Tamil soil under the favourable auspicies of the Kaḷabhra rule, that in the next century it required the all out efforts of the Śaiva and Vaishṇava āchāryas, though their misionary propaganda to restore their respective faiths to their original position. This stage in the history of the Tamil country marks the starting point of the decline of Buddhism in the Tamil country and the era of the predominance and popularity of Buddhism ends with the Kaḷabhra rule, which period may more appropriately be considered as the heyday of Buddhism in the Tamil country. As we shall see in the next chapter the pious exertions of the Hindu revivalists like the Nāyanmārs and Āḻvārs on behalf of the Vaidika religions dealt a severe blow to the Buddhists and their popularity and eminence began to gradually deteriorate until at

last by the 10th or the 12th century Buddhism was completely wiped out of the Tamil land. It would be interesting to note here that unlike the Buddhists who easily succumbed to the repressive policy of the Hindus, the Jains were able to withstand the militant activities of the Śaivites and Vaishṇavites for a longer time and continued to enjoy popular support and in some cases even royal patronage for some more centuries.

CHAPTER 4

The Period of Decline: Buddhism from the 7th Century A. D. onwards.

The period under survey is generally believed to mark the commencement of the decline of Buddhism in the Tamil country. This period begins with a strenuous war of religions in which the Vaidika sects of Śaivism and Vaishṇavism carried on active compaign against the non-vaidika sects and Jainism figures more prominently in this strife than Buddhism which seems to have reconciled itself definitely to a subordinate but by no means negligible position in the country. The preceding centuries witnessed a glorious epoch in the history of Buddhism, thanks to the sympathetic and tolerant disposition of some of the early Pallava monarchs and the encouraging and patronising attitude of the Kaḷabhra rulers. As noted already the struggle for supermacy was vigorously going on amongst the different religions, viz. Hinduism Jainism and Buddhism, but no one religion could suppress and supplant the others and claim the undivided loyalty of the Tamil people. In the preceding centuries it was the turn of Buddhism to enjoy popular support but that state of affairs was not to continue long for Hinduism and Jainism unable to acquilsce any longer in the supremacy of Buddhism mustered their strength to deliver a severe blow to it and thus arrest its progress. By this time the Jaina teachers had become numerous and it would be more appropriate to say that the first check in the further expansion of Buddhism was received from the hands of Jains rather than from the Hindus. Both Tamil and Sanskrit literatures clearly point to the triumph of Jains over Buddhists. As late as 754 A. D. Akaḷaṇka, a well

known Jain controversialist is said to have confuted the Buddhists in argument at the court of Hēmasitala in Kāñchi,[1] and procured their expulsion to Ceylon. Without proper leaders and with the withdrawal of royal support, Buddhism declined gradually after the 7th and 8th centuries A. D. and the few adherents who were still loyal to it met with further discomfiture at the hands of the Śaiva and Vaishṇava reformers. Thus the 7th century A. D. was noteworthy for the rank and turbulent conflicts between the Jains and the Buddhists on the one hand and the Śaivites and Vaishṇavites on the other. In striking contrast to the Saṇgam Age which was an age of comparitive quiet in the religious field, this period witnessed a series of conflicts. It was this age which called forth such stalwart champions of the Vaidika faith as Tirugñānasambandhar and Tirumiḻisai Āḻvār, who, by their memorable religious propaganda handed down in their hymns, were destined to revolutionize South Indian religious thought and out look. These champions of the orthodox faith had as their aim the uprooting of the heretical sects from the Tamil soil and the re-establishment of the Vedic faith in all its glory and the central feature of the religious history of this age is the determined effort made by them to suppress the two heretical sects - Jainism and Buddhism - an effort which was marked by greater success against the Buddhists than against the Jains. This revival of Brāhminism in the form of the Bhakti movement shook the heretical religions to their very foundations and ultimately resulted in their downfall. Brāhminism as a result of centuries of contact with Buddhism was now considerably modified in principles and practices and successsully avoided the perils and pitfalls of blind orthodoxy and expressed itself in the form of Bhakti. The champions of this popular movement, first to raise their voices against Buddhism were those who worshipped,

1. *Madras Epigraphy Report*, 1905, p. 57
This Hēmasitala is identified by some scholars with Hiraṇyavarman, father of Nandivarman Pallavamalla.

Śiva, popularly known as the Nāyanmārs and these had to put a very hard fight against the Buddhists, but nevertheless they succeeded in stemming the tide of their further progress, and though the schiematics continued to linger here and there in the Tamil kingdom for some more time, they ceased to be of any practical importance and never regained their lost position. It may be noted here that it was during this period that innumerable temples, a characteristic feature of the Tamil country, were begun to be built. As this process of gradual annihilation of Buddhism, so successfully inaugurated by the Śaiva Nāyanmārs was going on, there appeared another set of votaries of the Bhakti movement, worshippers of Vishṇu, called the Āḻvārs to add to the general excitement and to accelerate the decline of Buddhism. To Śaṅkarāchāryā was left only the task of formal and theoretical completion of the religious revolution that was already becoming a *fait accompli* at least in South India. Buddhism in the 7th century A. D. had thus to contend with a set of external foes who were determined to wipe out her influence from Tamil society and single handed she had to fight the ordeal in which ultimately she had to succumb to the many sided attacks of her adversaries.

The main sources for our knowledge on these aspects of the religious history of the Tamil country during this age are the itinerary of Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese traveller who visited South India during this period, the vast collection of sacred literature in Tamil in the form of short poems going by the name of *Tēvāram* and *Tiruvāśagam* of the Śaivas and the *Nālāyiradivya-prabhandam* of the Vaishṇavas ranging between a period of nearly four centuries from the 6th to the 10th century A. D. and lastly a Sanskrit farce called '*Mattavilāsaprahasana*' written by the contemporary Pallava Monarch, Mahēndravarman I which, in an admirable manner portrays in the main the social and religious conditions of the age and especially throws a flood of light on the condition of Buddhism in the Tamil country. Thus

the evidence that is available is purely literary and other varieties of evidence like epigraphical and monumental are few and far between. Let us now proceed to examine in the light of the evidence available from the sources mentioned above, what exactly was the position of Buddhism during that period and how far it is in consonance with the general belief among scholars regarding the decline of Buddhism.

It is a general belief among scholars that by the 7th century A. D. the decline of Buddhism in the south or for the matter of that in the Tamil country had become prominent which fact presupposes that the commencement of the decline must have been still earlier. Let us see how far this statement is true. It would be most helpful to take into account first what Hiuen Tsang says in his itinerary about the Tamil country and Buddhism there. The identification of some of the places mentioned by the pilgrim is still a matter of controversy and particularly the region described by the pilgrim as 'Mo-lo-kiutcha' (Malakūṭa) and his account connected with it have baffiled many scholars and though the balance of opinion is in favour of identifying the region (Malakūṭa) with the Pāṇḍya country there still hangs some uncertainty about that question. Let us see what the pilgrim has to say about the south: From Dhānakaṭaka (region round about Amarāvathi) Hieun Tsang went south west about 1000 li (5 li = 1 mile) to Chu-li-ya which has been rendered as the Chōḷa country. About this Chu-li-ya (Chōḷa) the pilgrim observes:[2] "This country was about 2400 li. in circuit and its capital was above 10 li in circuit. It was a wide jungle region with very few settled inhabitants and bands of highwaymen went about openly; it had a moist, hot climate; the people were of a fierce and profligate character and were believers in the Tīrthikas; the Buddhist monasteries were in ruins and only some of them had

2. Watters: *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, Vol. II, p. 224

Brethren; there were several tens of Deva temples and the Digambaras were numerous. To the south-east of the capital and near it was an Aśōka tope where the Buddha preached, wrought miracles, overcame Tīrthikas and received men and devas into his communion." It is wrong to assume that the Chuliya of the pilgrim refers to the Chōḷa country with its capital at Uraiyūr. On the other Land the region refered to is the land of the Teugu Chōḷas the Cuddappai and Kurnool Districts. The above account of the pilgrim is influence of Buddhism in that part of South India. Let us see what the pilgrim has got to say about the condition of Buddhism in the regions further to the South.

After visiting the Chōḷa country the pilgrim proceeds towards south and passing 1500 or 1600 li reaches the country of Ta-lo-pi-ch'a (Draviḍa). About this the pilgrim says:[3]. "The region had a rich fertile soil; it abounded in fruits and flowers and yielded precious substances. The people were courageous, throughly trustworthy and public spirited and they esteemed great learning ...... There were more than 100 Buddhist monasteries with above 10,000 brethren all of the Sthāvira school. The Deva temples were 80 and the majority belonged to the Digambaras. This country had been frequently visited by the Buddha and king Aśōka had erected topes at the various spots where the Buddha had preached and admitted members into his order. The capital was the birth place of Dharmapāla Pusa...... Not far from the south of the capital was a large monastery which was a rendezvous for the most eminent men of the country. It had an Aśōka tope about 100 feet high where the Buddha had once defeated Tīrthakas by preaching and had received many into his communion."

The above account shows that Kāñchī was the capital of Draviḍa and Buddhism is pictured to be in a prosperous

3. *Ibid.* p. 226.

condition there. The existence of numerous flourishing monasteries and a large number of Buddhist mendicants is vouchsafed and though the other religions were not altogether absent, it may be inferred from the pilgrim's narrative that Buddhism was occupying a position of considerable importance in that city. We also learn that the Sthāvira school was the prevailing faith. Besides, Kāñchī is depicted to be a seat of Buddhist culture and above all is described as a Buddhist centre of learning where something like a modern university was functioning (we shall study more about this in due course). All these go to speak in favour of the continued prosperity enjoyed by that religion in this region. The narrative reveals to us a picture where Buddhism claims still a large number of adherents at least with reference to Toṇḍamaṇḍalam, if not the entire Tamil country. Whatever might be said regarding Buddhism in other parts of the Tamil country, it may, with a fair degree of certainty and truth, be said that Buddhism in the Kāñchī region enjoyed as much popularity and support as in the preceding centuries and did not show any symptoms of decline in the 7th century A. D.

From Draviḍa the pilgrim proceeding 3000 li. or so south comes to the country of Molo-ku-ta (malakūṭa). About this much debated territory Hiuen Tsaing says:[4] "This country was about 5000 li. in circuit with a capital above 40 li in circuit. The soil was brackish and barren; the country was a depot for sea pearls; the climate was very hot and the people were black; they were harsh and impetuous, of mixed religions, indifferent to culture and only good at trade. There were many remains of old monasteries, very few monasteries were in preservation and there was only a small number of Brethren. There were hundreds of Dēva temples and the professed adherents of the various sects, especially the Digambaras, were very numerous. Not far from the east side of the capital were the remains of the old

4. *Ibid*. pp. 228–29

monastery built by Aśōka's brother, Mahēndra, with the foundations and dome, the latter alone visible, of a ruined tope on the east side of the remains. The Tope had been built by Aśōka to perpetuate the memory of Buddha having preached ..... In the south of the country near the sea was the Mo-lo-ya (Malaya) mountain with lofty cliffs and ridges and deep valleys and gullies on which were sandal, camphor and other trees. To the east of this was the Pu-ta-lo-ka (Pōṭalaka) mountain with steep narrow paths........ on the top was a lake of clear water, whence issued a river, which on its way to the sea flowed twenty times round the mountain. By the side of the lake was a stone deva palace frequented by Kuan-tzu-tsai Pusa."

First of all let us treat the question of the identification of this region, Malakūṭa. The generally accepted view is that it comprised the Pāṇḍyan kingdom of the south and some territories of the west coast. Dr. Hultzsch in an aritcle in the *Indian Antiquary*[5] says that the first half of the name Malakūṭa stands for the well known Draviḍian word 'Mala', ('malai' in Tamil) meaning 'hill' and the second half may be connected with 'Kūṟṟam' which means a division, or more probably with Kōṭṭam which means a district in Tamil inscriptions. Thus Malakūṭa may be equated with Malanāḍu or Malaināḍu, the hill country. As Hiuen Tsang places Malakūṭa to the south of Draviḍa and attributes to it a circuit of 5000 li General Cunningham supposes that it must have included, besides Malabar, the whole southern part of the Madras Presidency beyond the Kāvērī i. e. the modern districts of Tanjore and Madura on the east with Coimbatore, Cochin and Travancore on the west.[6] Dr. Hultzsch is in complete agreement with the view of General Cunningham and accepts this identification.[7]

5. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 239–42
6. General Cunningham, *Ancient Geography of India* (S. N. Majumdar Śāstri's edition), p.629
7. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVIII, p. 241

What Hiuen Tsang says is that going south from Kāñchī 3000 li. we come to the country of Mo-lo-kiu-cha. Mr. Beal in a note in his Si-yu-ki[8] says that the country is otherwise called Chi-mo-lo. Mr. Beal again observes[9] that this term may be restored to Kumor. Is there such a place or country? Respecting the use of Kumar for Kumari there is an observation of Dr. Caldwell that "Komar derives its name from the Sanskrit Kumari, a virgin, one of the names of Durgā, the presiding divinity of the place" (*Comparative Grammar*, Introduction, p. 98). On the strength of this Mr. Beal says that "there can be little doubt therefore that the Chi-mo-lo of Hiuen Tsang refers to the southern region of Travancore and Cape Comorin."[10] Again as the term Chi-mo-lo is satisfactorily identified by Dr. Caldwell with Tamiḻa, the name of the Tamil people, there is no doubt that that territory must have included the southern most parts of the Madras Presidency.[11] This identification of Malakūṭa with Malaināḍu has been accepted by many eminent scholars and Prof. K. A. Nīlakaṇṭa Śāstri in this connection remarks:[12] "With whatever defects of method, Cunningham must be held to have arrived at a substantially sound identification of Malayakūṭa (as he renders the name in his statement) that 'the province of Malayakūṭa must have included the modern districts of Tanjore and Madura on the east, with Coimbatore, Cochin and Travancore on the west.'' It is also stated that the area so indicated roughly corresponds to the Pāṇḍyan kingdom

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8. Beal: *Si-yu-ki or Buddhist Records of the Western World*, Vol. II, Note on pp. 231–32.
9. Beal's article entitled 'Two sites named by Hiuen Tsang in the 10th Book of Si-Yu-ki in the *J. R. A. S.* (New Series), Vol. XV (1883), pp. 336–37
10. *Ibid.* p. 337
11. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVIII, p. 241
12. *Proceedings of the sixth Oriental Conference, Patna* (1930), p. 176

as it was in the days when Hiuen Tsang came to South India.[13] Dr. Pope a well known authority on the Tamil language says: "Malakūṭa must be Malakōṭṭa, Malaināḍu, Malaya, Malayāḷam and included the whole southern part of the Madras Presidency, the Pāṇḍya and the Chēra kingdoms".[14]

It was Dr. Burnell who disputed this theory and made an attempt to upset this identification and put forward a newtheory identifying Malakūṭa with a part of the Tanjore District round about the modern town of Kumbakōṇam on the strength of a Tamil inscription of Kulōttuṅga Vira Chōḷa.[15] But this theory of Dr. Burnell has not found favour with other scholars and Hultzsch in the article referred to above[16] has disproved Burnell's thesis and has attempted to establish Cunningham's original identification. Mr. K. V. Subramaṇia Iyer also is in favour of identifying Malakūta with the Pāṇḍyan kingdom and he says: "Hiuen Tsang himself locates the Chōḷa territory 1000 li to the west of Dhānyakaṭika, i.e. Amarāvathi in the Kistna District which takes us to Kurnool. When the pilgrim himself has said this, we have no reasons to infer that the territory to the south of the Pallava dominion belonged to the Chōḷas. At the time of Neḍuñjeḻiyan, the Chōḷas were completely dispossessed of their ancestral dominion in the Trichy

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13. K. A. N. Śāstri, *Pāṇḍyan Kingdom*, Chap. V.

14. *Nālaḍiyār*, Introduction, p. X: Dr. P. C. Alexander *Buddhism in Kēraḷa*, p. 92

15. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. VII, pp. 39–40. This inscription is in the Tanjore temple and records the gifts and endowments made by that king, as well as others. Among the endowments by others than the king, we find one by the community of *Malakūṭa Chūḍāmani Chaturvēdimaṅgalam* which is said to be in the Āvūr Kūṟṟam. The village is referred to as an "ornament of the kingdom of Malakūṭa" and was situated in the subdivision of Āvūr which was

and Tanjore districts and that his successors had to fight not with the Chōḷas but with the Pallavas. It seems clear from this that the Chōḷas had no hold in that locality which appears to have been shared by the Pallavas and Pāṇḍyas. Thus there is no doubt that Malakūṭa must represent the Pāṇḍya country or be an important,territorial division in it".[17] He also says that the distance given by the pilgrim from Kāñchī to Malakūṭa viz. 3000 li. takes us to very near the capital Madura and that the description given by the pilgrim of the country, its people and their pursuits fits in quite well with the Pāṇḍya country.

According to Hiuen Tsang on the south of Malakūṭa bordering the sea were the Malaya mountains remarkable for their high peaks and precipices and white sandalwood trees.

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therefore in Malakūṭa. Āvūr is still a well known place 5 or 6 miles southwest of Kumbakōṇam. It follows therefore that Malakūṭa was the name of the kingdom comprised roughly speaking in the delta of Kāvēri.

16. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVIII, pp. 239–42 Dr. Hultzsch points out that the Tamil inscription to which Dr. Burnell refers is wrongly quoted and interpreted. The Tanjore inscription which Burnell refers to does not mention Malakūṭa Chūḍāmaṇi Chaturvēdimaṅgalam but refers to a place Manukula Chudāmaṇi Chaturvēdimaṅgalam. He says: "The reference is to an insctiption of the 29th year of the Chōḷa king Kō Rājakēsarivarman alias Rāja Rāja Deva and to an inscription of the 10th year of Kō Parakēsarivarman alias Rājēndra Chōḷa Deva. Each of these two inscriptions reads: "the members of the sabha of Iṟumbūdal alias *Manukula Chūḍāmaṇi Chaturvēdimaṅgalam*, a brahmadeya in Āvūr Kūṟṟam (a sub division) of Nitta vinōda vaḷanāḍu. This does not support the identification of Malakūta with the region of the Kāvēri delta.

17. K. V. Subramaṇia Iyer: *Historical Sketches of Ancient Dekhan*, p. 119–120

To the east of these mountains was the Mount Poṭalaka on the top of which was a lake with full of clear water and from which there flowed a great river. It was also the residence of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara. And to the north-east of this mountain, on the border of the sea was a town from which people embarked to the island of Ceylon. The term Malaya in Sanskrit and Malayāḷam refers to the Western Ghats and in Tamil besides referring to the Western Ghats it is also applied to another mountain which is called 'Chandanāchala' (the mountain of the sandal), Podigai or Podiyam which is supposed to be the residence of sage Agastiya.[18] The Poṭalaka of Hiuen Tsang is identified by Dr. Hultzsch with this Podigai.[19] He says that the agreement between the two words Podigai and Poṭalaka is close enough to justify this identification and if this identification is accepted as correct the river about which Hiuen Tsang speaks in his account would be Tāmraparṇi.[20] Dr. Caldwell's opinion that

18. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVIII, p. 241
19. *Ibid.* p. 241
20. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVIII, p. 241. "According to Tāranāth's *History of Buddhism*, Poṭala was the name of a Mythical mountain in the south, the seat of Avalokitesvara. On the way to it the ocean, a great river and a lake had to be crossed. This myth of the northern Buddhists must have been known to Hiuen Tsang and the change of Podiyam or Podigai into Poṭala or Poṭalaka may be due to a popular etymology which Hiuen Tsang made either unconsciously or from a desire to connect the information collected on his visit to South India with that contained in his holy books. From similar motives either Hiuen Tsang or his Buddhist informants seem to have transformed Agastya who is supposed to reside on Podigai into the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara." There is a great deal of force in Hultzsch's suggestion that the

the source of the Tāmraparṇi is in the mountain Podigai[21] supports this conclusion. But Mr. Beal does not support this identification and expresses the view that the Poṭalaka of Hiuen Tsang refers to Adams Peak in Ceylon.[22] His arguments are that 3000 li south of Kāñchī, according to the pilgrim, cannot bring us to the Nilgri hills and that there is no peak in that region sacred as a place of pilgrimage and residence of a Bodhisattva with a lake on its top and a river flowing from it. Eventhough Mr. Beal emphasises that Mount Poṭalaka must be none other than Adam's Peak, in a foot note in his article he himself throws out a suggestion that Poṭalaka might be Podigai in the Western Ghats. The foot note runs thus: "It might indeed be referred to the mountain called by Ptolemy 'Bittigo', a detached mass of the Ghats south of the Coimbatore gap, apparently that true Malaya or the Paurāṇk mountains. The most prominent mountain in this mass is called in old Tamil Pothiga".[23] In Tamil literature the name Podigai or Podiyil is applied to the southernmost section

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pilgrim reports as legends relating to Avalokitesvara what he heard of the popular beliefs concerning the sage Agastya. In fact it appears to have been commonly believed by the Buddhists of Tamil land that Agastya learned his Tamil from Avalokitesvara before he gave it to the world. This is evident from the opening verses of the *Vīraśōḻiyam*, a Tamil work of 11th century A. D. in which the author Buddhamitra writes: "The sweet Tamil which Agastya expounded to a worthy world after learning it from Avalokita of praiseworthy qualities".

"ஆயுங்குணத்தவலோகிதன் பக்கல் அகத்தியன் கேட்டு
ஏயும் புவனிக்கு இயம்பிய தன்தமிழ்"

(Proceedings of the 6th Oriental Conference, 1930, p. 178.

21. Caldwell: *Comparative Grammar*, 2nd edition, Introduction
22. *J. R. A. S.* (New Series), Vol. XV, pp. 337–38. p. 100
23. *J. R. A. S.* (New Series), Vol. XV, p. 338

of the Western Ghats and thus the *Śilappadikāram* mentions the Podiyil and the Imayam evidently as mountains in the extreme south and north of India.[24] The consensus of scholarly opinion is in favour of these identifications viz. the Malaya mountains with the Western Ghats and the Poṭalaka with Podigai. If we accept these it is impossible to seek for Poṭalaka in Ceylon as Mr. Beal does. It must be assumed that Hiuen Tsang was possibly misinformed when he placed the Malaya mountains to the south instead of the west of Malakūṭa. The observation of Prof. K. A. N. Śāstri on this subject is worthy of note. He says: "If we take the general impression produced on the mind by the pilgrim's statement and compare with it the general impression which, anyone familiar with the head-waters of the Tāmraparṇi' carries in his mind about the mountain range known as the Podigai in Tamil literature there would be little room for doubt that in Malaya we have a reference to the southernmost portion of the Western Ghats and that in the Poṭalaka we must recognise, with Hultzsch, the well-known Podigai or Podiyil."[25]

Then arises the question of the capital of Malakūṭa. The unnamed capital of Malakūṭa is placed by a Hiuen Tsang 3000 li. to the south of Kāñchīpuram. Cunningham remarks[26] that 3000 li to the south of Kāñchī would take us far out into the sea beyond Cape Comorin and so suggests 1300 li for 3000 li. in which case we can fix it up to be Madura, but there is no authority for such an alteration of figures nor can we adopt the 3000 li. given by Julien in a note on p. 193 of the Life of Hiuen Tsang.[27] Mr. Beal identifies Chi-mo-lo (another name given in the original text for Malakūṭa) with Kumari or Cape Comorin;[28]

24. *Śilapdadikāram*, Canto I, line 14 and XXVII, lines 68–69
25. *Proceedings of the Sixth Oriental Conference* (1930) p. 177
26. General Cunningham: *Ancient Geography of India* (Majumdar Śāstri Edition), pp. 628–630
27. *J.R.A.S.* (New Series), Vol. XV (1833), p. 336
28. *Ibid* p. 337

but it is difficult to accept this as correct for we do not know of any tradition of Cape Comorin having ever been the capital of a country.[28a]

S. N. Majumdar is prepared to accept the pilgrim's figure (viz, 3000 li) without any amendations and says that 3000 li. to the south of Kāñchī will not take us so much to the south. He also adds: "The ancient road to the south of Kāñchī passed through Tirukkōilūr, Trichinopoly (Uṟaiyūr) Tanjore district and Koḍumbai to Madura the capital of the Pāṇḍyas and this route makes up the distance of 3000 li."[29] Cunningham himself suggests that 'Kaulam' or Quilon may have been the capital at the time of the pilgrim's visit. But this does not seem probable for Malakūṭa was primarily the Pāṇḍya country, though it included the Chēra kingdom and secondly, the distance of the place does not agree with the pilgrim has stated, for the place is not more than 400 miles to the south-west of Kāñchī.[30] Dr. Hultzsch suggests that the capital referred to by the Chinese pilgrim is Koṟkai in the Tinnevelly district: the Koṟkai of the Tamil classics and *Periplus* and of Ptolemy, which was according to Dr. Caldwell the capital of the Pāṇḍyas.[30(a)]

But anyhow the pilgrim's references to the barren nature of that part of the country, its hot temperature and its dark complexioned people, its active seaborne trade, and his mention about the Malaya mountains and to their east the Mount Poṭalaka, the lake of clear water on its top and a great river flowing from it and finally his reference to the port of embarkation to Ceylon which lay to the north-east of this mountain on

28a. Dr. P. C. Alexander, *Buddhism in Kēraḷa*, p. 94

29. *Proceedings of the 6th Oriental Conference* (1930) Patna p. 175

30. Dr. P. C. Alexander, Op. cit. pp. 93-94

30(a). Dr. P: C. Alexandert *Op.Cit.* p. 94

the border of the sea–all these are remarkably similar to what we know of the Pāṇḍyan kingdom, of which the capital, which the pilgrim does not name, was no doubt, Madura.

One question that has given rise to a considerable amount of controversy in this connection is whether Hiuen Tsang actually visited the country of Malakūṭa or gave an account of it from hearsay. A statement in the *'Life'* seems to imply that Hiuen Tsang did not visit Malakūṭa. Regarding this statement Watters cautiously observes: "As this is not very clear and as the direction is not given we should not lightly accept this statement. There is nothing in the pilgrim's account of the country to show that he did not visit it and see its capital and the district around, although he may not have gone to remote objects of interest.[31] Again referring to Hiuen Tsang's description of the monastery near the capital of Malakūṭa Watters says: "The account of this monastery and its Aśōka Tope of which only the dome remained visible is apparently that of a visitor at the time of the description.[32] But Mr. Watters himself does not seem to be sure of this and in another context he says: "But it is perhaps better to regard him as writing about Malakūṭa and Ceylon from information given to him in Drāviḍa and from books."[33] Commenting on these statements Prof. K. A. N. Śāstri observes: "Wātters' remark that the pilgrim does not tell us anything about the nature of the country between Drāviḍa and Malakūṭa is perfectly correct but there is nothing in this to point to the inference that he may not have gone to Malakūṭa ...... It appears therefore right to follow the indication in the records to which Watters has drawn such pointed attention rather than the vague statement in the *'Life'* that Hiuen Tsang was talkng from hearsay.[34] From

31. Watters: *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India* Vol. II, p. 229

32. *Ibid.* p. 230

33. *Ibid.* p. 233

34. *Proceedings of the 6th Orientāl Confeience,* (1930), p. 174

the above account the conclusion is irresistible that the Chinese traveller must have actually visited the country of Malakūṭa and that his account was not written from mere hearsay.

Regarding the state of Buddhism in Malakūṭa, as he found it, the Chinese traveller says that there were many remains of old monasteries and only a small number of Brethren. The Buddhist monasteries were found to be in a deplorable state of ruin and very few of them were well preserved. On the other hand he noticed many hundred Deva temples and a multitude of heretics mostly belonging to the Nirgranthas flourishing in the country. This was in painful contrast to what the pilgrim say in kāñchī, viz. hundreds of Buddhist monasteries and 10,000 brethren. He also speaks of an old monastery on the east side of the capital i. e. Madura. This was found in utter ruins, for he says that the foundation walls of the structure only survived and he also says that that was built by Mahendra.

This picture of the pilgrim no doubt reveals the diminishing influence of Buddhism in that region and marks its declining stage. But yet the pilgrim is unwilling to admit the decay but his truthful narrative lets it be seen, whereas I-Tsing who came to India a little later frankly deplores the decay of that faith in the whole country. True to what he says about this country that it is a country of 'mixed religions' we see the other two religions also viz. Hinduism and Jainism which were hitherto in the background now vying with each other to drive out Buddhism and secure the place of predominance. Therefore the general impression that is formed by the pilgrim's account about Malakūṭa is that Buddhism had begun to decline in that part of the country.

Admitting the limitations of Hiuen Tsang's narrative on Buddhism it is sufficiently clear from his account that Buddhism continued to be influential in the Drāviḍa country while the process of decline had set in in the Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya countries.

Let us now examine what exactly is its position in the Tamil country in the light of an entirely different source viz. the vast collection of religious literature of the Tamils going by the name of *Tēvāram* and *Tiruvāśagam* of the Śaiva Nāyanmārs and the *Nālāyiradivyaprabandham* of the Āḻvārs.

Taking first the Śaiva sacred hymns called the *Tēvāram* they form part of the *Tirumuṟai* or eleven groups of hymns and songs compiled and arranged by a Brāhmin priest Nambiāṇḍār Nambi. Of these eleven collections the first three contain the hymns of Sambandar, and the next three those of Appar or Tirunāvukkaraśu, another of the *Tēvāram* trio, an elder contemporary of Saṃbandar, and the seventh comprises the rather humorous hymns of Sundaramūrti of a later generation. These seven collections together go by the name of *Tēvāram* and are, perhaps, intended to serve as a counterpart of the earlier portions of the Vedic hymns which they closely resemble in being but praises and prayers offered to the deity. Just as the Vedic hymns, the utterances of these saint salso soon acquired sacredness and began to be used much in the same way on ceremonial and religious occasions and provision was made for singing them in temples. The eighth collection consists of the *Tiruvāśagam* of Māṇikkavāśagar another Śaiva celebrity of a still later date.

That Buddhism was also prevalent in certain parts of the Tamil country is very well seen from the hymns of Sambandhar and Appar for the two hymners who lived in the latter half of the 7th century A. D. must have sung only about what they saw viz. the wide prevalence of Buddhism and Jainism which they denounced and suppressed. Every one of Sambandhar's hymns, invariably the tenth verse of every hymn, not even the very first hymn excepted, contains a thorough denunciation of the Buddhists and Jains and from this we have to infer that those religions were popular at that time. When singing about every place he visited he mentions the existence there of Buddhists and Buddhist settlements which only reflects their popularity and

numerical strength and it also amounts to the acceptance by these Nāyanmārs of the fact that Buddhism and Jainism prevailed everywhere in the Tamil country, in however small a degree it may be. The numerous and frequent references to Buddhism and the unceasing efforts they took to stamp out that religion from the Tamil country are indicative of its strength and popularity. Had that religion (Buddhism) been in a decripit stage it would not have called forth such concentrated efforts on that part of these saints for a vigorous campaign against the religion. The heretical religions were so popular and strong as to call forth the attacks of the Śaiva saints and the Vaishṇava Āḻvārs.

The one cherished ambition of the Tēvāram hymners was to revive the Vedic faith and Śaivism. They were resolved to overthrow Buddhism and Jainism and to entirely wipe them out from the Tamil soil. To revive the sacrifices hated by the, to restore the prosperity of the Gods and Brāhmaṇs and to re-establish the Śaiva religion in all its glory–these were their cherished objects in life. In pursuance of their aims those saints travelled throughout Tamilnad visiting all sacred places and singing hymns on everyone of them. In the course of their endless peregrinations they carried on a vigrous propaganda condemning the Buddhists and Jains and upholding the Śaiva faith. The innumerable Śaiva temples mentioned by them and the zealous and rousing receiption that they met with in every place they visited from the Śaiva devotees show plainly the popularity of Śaivism in those days. We know from Tamil works like *Periyapurāṇam* and *Tēvāram* that these saints in the course of their wanderings engaged themselves in religious disputations with rival sects and we have on record numerous instances where the Śaiva votaries had ultimately emerged successful in such controversies and established the cause of Śaivism. The main achievements of Appar ānd Sambandhar are their triumphs over the Buddhists and Jains who were then to be

found in considerable numbers in the Pāṇḍyan country and Toṇḍaimaṇḍalam.

The propaganda of Sambandhar was very vigorous. "Do not listen to the Buddhists and Jains who condemn Śiva who does not care for them. What do the Buddhists and Jains know ? Before falling into their nets go and worship Śiva. Be not misled by the sweet words of the tactful Jains. Their preaching and disputation are no good"-This is the strain of his propaganda and pages may be filled with quotations bearing on this theme.

Tirugñānasambandhar's life is narrated at great length in the *Periyapurāṇam* but scarcely with such particulars as would be useful to a modern historian. The narrative is tainted by legendary accounts and could not be relied upon for purposes of history. Tirugñānasambandar who was born of Brāhmin parents at Śīrkāḻi was bestowed with divine wisdom at the age of three and from that time onwards acquired the gift of composing verses in praise of Śiva. People from all over the Tamil country flocked to this place to have a look at this prodigy and to invite him to their places. He was not slow in responding to their requests and commemorated his visits to various places by composing a hymn of ten stanzas in praise of Śiva and the place visited. 384 padigams of 10 verses each sung by Sambandhar are now extent and almost all padigams contain one or more references, only deprecatory in nature, to the Buddhists and Jains. As we have already stated Sambandhar was an indefatigable traveller and it was while he was thus travelling about that he received an invitation from the Pāṇḍyan queen Maṅgaiyarkaraśi, wife of Kūn Pāṇḍya who had become a convert to Jainism. His Queen and the minister Kulacchiṟai remained loyal to their traditional faith viz. Śaivism and wanted to reclaim their sovereign and naturally they had to look to this boy prodigy was rapidly establishing his reputation as the defender of

the Śaiva faith. Gñānasambandhar was indeed the purest and greatest of the Tēvāram trio and unlike his elder contemporary Appar he was no Jain and had no past to look back upon with remorse and was best known to legend and history as an inveterate foe of the Buddhists and Jains. Gñānasambandhar was only looking forward for a suitable opportunity for a decisive trial of strength and he readily accepted the invitation of the Pāṇḍyan Queen and proceeded at once to the Pāṇḍyan capital from Vēdāraṇyam where he was camping at that time. That there was a meeting of the two rival sects at Madura is established beyond doubt with the help of the hymns connected with the proceedings at the meeting and the *Periya-purāṇam* also testifies to this. But regarding the debate we have no particulars and the story is full of miracles. Suffice it to say that the Jains were utterly defeated in the disputation and Kūn Pāṇḍya was reconverted to Śaivism.

After thus upholding the cause of Śaivism he seems to have recommenced his travel and now the scene of his activity was laid in the Chōḷa country, the scene of his most remarkable achievements against the Buddhists. His encounter with and the ultimate overthrow of the Buddhists at Bōdhimaṅgai, a citadel of Buddhism, has not been as much known as his encounter with the Jains at Madura. "If the downfall of Buddhism at least in the Tamil districts can be ascribed to one individual more than to another that individual is Gñānasambandha,"[35] This is true to a great extent for as we shall see presently, it was his uncompromising attitude towards the Buddhists and his unbroken and relentless war against them that delivered a severe blow to the Buddhists and helped to retard their progress in the Tamil country. Regarding the story of the disputation between Sambandhar and the Buddhists, the account of Śambandhar's life in Nambiāṇḍār Nambi's *Tiruttoṇḍar Tiruvandādi* does not

35. *Tamilian Antiquary*, No. 3 (1909), p. 8

contain any reference to this incident. But in his other works on the life of the saint like *Āḷuḍaya Piḷḷayār Tiruvandādi, Āḷuḍaya Piḷḷayār Tirucchenbai viruttam* etc. there are repeated expressions which undoubtedly refer to this incident. Nambiaṇḍār Nambi repeatedly applies to Sambandhar terms like 'paramatha Kōḷari' (பரமத கோளரி) i. e 'lion to enemy faiths' and a specific reference to an incident in the dispute with the Buddhists is made in *Āḷuḍaya Piḷḷayār Tiruttogai* which reads:

> "நேர்வந்தபுத்தன் தலையைப் புவிமேற்புரளுவித்த
> விட்டகப் பாடல் விளம்பினன்".
>
> (lines 19–20)

i. e. "he uttered the magic song which caused the head of the opposing Buddhist to roll on the ground"[36] From this verse it is evident that Gñānasambandhar composed and recited a verse in the course of his disputation with the Buddhist opponent as a result of which the opponent's head was severed from the body and rolled on the ground. But Sēkkiḻār attributes the same miracle not to Sambandhar but to one of his devotees who is said to have had a long drawn out argument with a party of Buddhists who at the end were converted to Saivism and this disputation is reviewed at some length by Sēkkiḻār. It is in verse 904 of the *Periyapurāṇam* that the Buddhists are referred to and Bōdhimaṅgai is mentioned as a stronghold of the Buddhists.[37] Sambandhar after visiting

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36. *B. C. Law Commemoration Volume*, Part I, pp. 41–42.

37. "சீர்நிலவு திருத்தெளிச் சேரியினைச் சேர்ந்து
சிவபெருமான் தனைப்பரவிச் செல்லும்போது
சார்வறியாச் சாக்கியர் தம் போதிமங்கை சார்தலு
மற்றது அறிந்த சைவர் எல்லாம்
ஆர்கலியின் கிளர்ச்சி எனச் சங்கு தாரை
அளவிறந்த பல்லியங்கள் முழக்கி அர்த்துப்

Tirutteḷicchēri reached Bōdhimaṅgai where lived the Śākyas 'ignorant of the true faith'. Knowing this fully well the Śaivas sounded their conches and brass trumpets and many other musical instruments and thus proclaimed that Sambandhar who is like a 'devouring lion to the other faiths' had arrived there. Thus they drew the attention of the residents of the place to the arrival of the Śaiva saint and challenged them for a context. This challenge of the Śaivas to the Buddhists of the place could not go unaccepted and they readily took up the challenge and their reaction also was equally forceful. Verse 905 says:[38] "When the mean-minded Śākyas learnt of his arrival they gathered together and being greatly bewildered by the envy provoked in

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பார்குலவு தாரைக்காளஞ் சின்னம் எல்லாம்
பரசமயகோளரிவந்தான் என்றூத
(பெரியபுராணம், ஞானசம்பந்தர்,
(Verse 904)

Bōdhimaṅgai was a Bauddha settlement on the way from Teḷicchēri to Tirukkaḍāvūr. It may be the same as Bōdhimaṅgalam in the Māyavaram Taluk otherwise called Tiruviḍaikkaḷi. Buddha images have been discovered from the neighbourhood of this place in recent times. Bōdhimaṅgai seems to have been an exclusive colony of the Buddhists. (*B. C. Law Commemoration Volume*, Part I, p. 43)

38. "புல்லறிவிற் சாக்கியர்கள் அறிந்தார்கூடிப்
புகலியர்தம் புரவலனார் புகுந்து தங்கள்
எல்லையினில் எழுந்தருளும் பொழுது தொண்டர் எடுத்த
ஆர்ப்பொலியாலும் எதிர்முன் சென்று
மல்கி எழுந்திருச்சின்ன ஒலிகளாலும்
மனங்கொண்ட பொறாமையினால் மருண்டு தங்கள்
கல்வியினில் மேம்பட்ட புத்தநந்தி முதலான
தேரர்க்குங் கனற்று சொன்னார்"
(பெரியபுராணம். ஞானசம்பந்தர் புராணம்.
(Verse 905.)

their hearts by the noisy shouts of the servants of the Lord...... they went to their Buddhanandi and to the other learned Theras and angrily informed them of this." It is said in verse 906 that Buddhanandi when he came to know of all these things burst forth in anger and along with a congregation of Theras went and met Sambandhar. That there were a number of Theras in Bōdhimaṅgai leads us to infer that there must have flourished a Bauddha vihāra at that place. The first stage of the contest pictures Buddhanandi as the leader on the Buddhist side who does not approve of the noise and jubilation on the part of the Śaivas since they had not yet scored a victory to their credit. This attitude of the Buddhists is duly reported to Sambandhar who is patient and offers to meet Buddhanandi: but meanwhile a devotee of Sambandhar is impatient and utters a curse against Buddhanandi which acts immediately and Buddhanandi dies on the spot and there is confusion in the Buddhist camp.[39] But to the Buddhists this was a matter of great disgrace and they could not rest content with that. Though they were vanquished they could argue still and now they rally again under the leadership of

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39. "ஏறுயர்த்தார் சைவ நெறி ஆணை உய்க்க
எதிர் விலக்கும் இடையூற்றை எறிந்து நீக்கும்
மாறில் வலி மந்திரமாம் அசனிபோல வாய்மை உரைத்
திருத் தொண்டர் வாக்கினாலே
வேறுமொழிப் பகருற்பான் வந்த புத்தன்
மேனியையும் தலையினையும் வெவ்வேறாகக்
கூறுபட நூறியிடப் புத்தர் கூட்டங் குலைந்தோடி
விழுந்து வெருக் கொண்ட தன்றே"
Ibid. Verse 909)

Nambiaṇḍār Nambi's account reports that Buddhanandi's death was brought about by Sambandhar himself. After this incident Nambi's account does not give any particulars regarding what follows. Evidently Sēkkiḻār does not want

another Thera by name Sāriputta who is learned in the Piṭakas.[40] Sāriputta takes necessary precautions to safeguard himself against magic and trickery and begins the disputation with the devotee of Sambandhar and throughout the contest, Sambandhar is present but he does not personally take part in the controversy. The details of the discussion between the votaries of the two different creeds are well narrated in the *Periyapurāṇam* verses 912-925. From that account we may infer that the Theravāda school of uddhism was the prevailing faith and in his answers Sāriputta follows closely the Theravāda position regarding the Buddha, his Enlightenment and the nature of the release.[41] The ultimate result of the contest is the Bauddhas are vanquished and Sāriputta and his followers embrace Śaivism, accepting its superiority.[42] The account so far examined, it must be remembered, is that of a Śaiva writer meant to celebrate the victory of Śaivism. No doubt we have

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to attribute such a method of controversy to such a great saint as Sambandhar.

Ibid. Verse 911)

40. "அஞ்சி அகன்றோடிய அப்புத்தரெல்லாம் அதிசயித்து
மீண்டுமுடன் அலைந்து கூடி ... ...
... ...
தன்செயலின் மிக்குள்ள சாரிபுத்தன் தன்னையே
முன்கொண்டு பின்னுஞ் சார்ந்தார்"

41. K. A. N. Śāstri in *B. C. Law Commemoration Volume*, Part I, p. 46,

42. "புந்தியினால் அவருரைத்த பொருளின் தன்மை
பொருளன்றாம் படி அன்பர் பொருந்தக் கூற
மந்தவுணர்வுடையவரை நோக்கிச் சைவம்
அல்லாது மற்றொன்றும் இல்லை என்றே
அந்தமில் சீர்மறைகள் ஆகமங்கள் ஏனை அகில

got only one side of the picture and again this account of Śēkkiḻār is separated by four to five centuries from the date of the occurrence of these events which he narrates and therefore it would be safe not to take the narrative in its entirety as true. All that we can take for certain is the general fact that Gñānasambandhar upheld the cause of Śaivism not only against the Jains of the Pāṇḍyan country but also against the Buddhists of the Chōḷa country. This narrative also indicates the existence in considerable numbers of Theravāda Buddhists in the Tamil country at that time. The truth of the denunciations of Sambandhar in every place that he visited is proved by the archaeological finds discovered in such places. For instance, Tiruvalañjuḻi, four miles from Kumbakōṇam, has three hymns by Sambandhar and two by Appar Archaeology has brought to light a large roughly carved figure of a standing Buddha from this place. A large stone image of Buddha in the contemplating attitude with curly hair, topknot etc., with an old inscription has been found near Maṅganallūr at Peruñjēri, while Koṭṭapāḍi near Ambagarattūr has an image of the Buddha. There is an image of the Buddha from the village of Eḷaiūr (Nannilam Taluk) in the Madras museum. Again a Buddhist image was discovered at Kūvam (at present kept in the Madras museum). This place was called Tiruviṟkōḷam by Sambandhar and in his hymns on that place he sings the praises of Śiva and ends it by saying the Śiva gives plenty to his devotees who do not heed th preachings of Jains and Buddhists. (*Tēvāram III Tirumuṟai 23rd hymn 10th verse*)

There are numerous references to the Buddhists in Sambandhar's hymns and he speaks of their dress, mode of life,

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கலைப் பொருளுணர்ந்தோர் அருளிச் செய்ய
சிந்தையினில் அது தெளிந்து புத்தர் சங்கைத்திரு
மறையோர் சேவடிக்கீழ்ச் சென்று தாழ்ந்தார்''

(பெரியபுராணம், ஞானசம்பந்தர்)
(Verse 925)

their doctrines, their denial of the authority of the Vedas, their allegiance to the Bodhi tree and such other matters, of course always with a sneer. It would be interesting to note some such references. The very first hymnon *Tirubrahmāpuram* contains a reference to the Buddhsits where he says:

"புத்தரொடு பொறியில் சமணும் புலிங்கூற நெறி நில்லா
ஒத்த சொல்லவுலகம் பலி தேர்ந்தெனது உள்ளங் கவர்கள்வன்
மத்த யானை மறுகவ்வுரி போர்த்ததோர் மாயம்மிது வென்னப்
பித்தர் போலும் பிரமாபுர மேவிய பெம்மானிவனன்றே."

(Verse 10)

i. e. "He who goes about begging for alms and who captivates my heart while the world at large passes remarks at it lists (desires) and the Buddhists and the senseless Jain indulge in back-biting."

In a hymn on Tiruvālavāi Sambandhar refers to the Buddhists as those who hate vedic sacrifices,[43] those who do not follow the Vaidika dharma[44] worst sinners who do not follow the path laid down by the Vedas[45], these who do not know the Vedic dharma[46] etc. That he was resolved to put down the heretics by entering into disputation with them is evident from the above hymn. He refers to the Buddhists in the

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43. *Tvēāram* III, Tirumuṟai, Hymn 108, Verse 1.
"வேதவேள்வியை நிந்தனை செய்துழல்
ஆதமில்லியம ணொடுதேரரை"

44. *Ibid.* Verse 2,

"விதி வைதிகத்தின் வழியொழுகாத அக்
கைதவம் முடைக்காரமண் தேரரை"

45. *Ibid* Verse 3. "மறைவழக்கமில்லாத மாபாவிகள்"

46. *Tēvāram*, III, 53–10
"வேத நெறியை அறிகிலார்"

following uncomplimentary terms. "இழிதொழில் சேர்சாக்கியர்"[47] (the Sākkiyars who are given to base acts)," கருஞ்சாக்கியப் பேய்கள்"[48] (the Black Sākkiya Devils)," கொடுஞ்சாக்கியர்"[49] (Cruel Sākkiyas)," சற்றேயுந் தாமறிவில் சாக்கியர்"[50] (senseless Sākkiyas), சாக்கியக்கயவர்"[51] (Sākkiya rogues). Another reference to them by Sambandhar is very interesting and it says:" சாவாயுவாது செய் சாக்கியர்"[52] (the Sākkiyas who argue till death), which shows that the Buddhists are capable of arguing to the last. The Sākkiyars are referred to in one place as wearing monk's robes" சீவரத்த சாக்கியர்"[53] புறங்கூறுஞ் சாக்கியர்[54] (the Sākkiyas who back-bite); "வஞ்சச் சாக்கியர்"[55] (hypocrat Sākkiyas)" நன்றியொன்றுமுணராதவன் சமண் சாக்கியர்[56] (the Samaṇars and Sākkiyas who are ungrateful.) "நாடி நின்றறிவில் நாணிலிகள் சாக்கியர்[57] (shameless and senseless Sākkiyas)

In some places the Buddhists are referred to as Theras. "அறிவில் சிறுதேரர்"[58]" (senseless Theras), "குணமில்லாத்

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47. I Tirumuṟai, Hymn 132, Verse 10.
48. II- 9-10 and I- 77-10.
49. III- 55-10.
50. II- 16-10.
51. III. 93-10
52. II. 11-9 and 10
53. I. 61-10
54. II. 57-10
55. I. 68-10
56. II. 75-10
57. III. 16-1
58. I. 74-10

தேரர்[59]" (characterless Theras), தீய கருமஞ் சொல்லும் சிறுபுன் தேரர்"[60](base Theras given to despicable deeds), "தேற்றமில் வினைத் தொழில் தேரர்' "[61] (the Theras engaged in useless and profitless acts).

In other places Sambandhar refers to them as Buddhist or Bōdhiyār "ஆதமிலி புத்தர்"[62] "புத்தர்கள்"[63] "போதியர்" and "போதியார்"[64]. In one place they are referred to as those who worship the Bodhi tree, "போதிபேணுவார்"[65]. There are also some reference to the Piṭakas, the sacred literature of the Buddhists like "உடம்பினை மறைக்கும் படக்கர்கல் பிடக்குரை"[66] (the foul words of the mischievous Śākkiyas who cover bodies only), "சீவர மூடிப் பிடக்கே உரை செய்வாரோரு"[67] (Buddhists who wear the ochre coloured cloth and are givento foul talk) "பிடக்குரை"[68]

Sambandhar's verses enable us to have a glimpse at the customs and manners, mode of dress and habits of the Buddhists of these days. That they wore some dress covering their body as against those we did not i.e. the Jains, is evident from the different phrases used by Sambandhar. We also know that such dress that was worn by the Buddhists was made of silk and

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59. III. 32–10
60. II. 80–10
61. III. 52–10
62. II. 31–10;
63. I. 129–10, 136–10; II. 13–10. 23–10, 28–10, 96–10, 118–10 III. 71–10, 87–10, 97–10, 111–10.
64. I. 66–10, 107–10; II. 12–10, 48–10; III. 15–10, 29–100
65. III. 7–10
66. II. 30–10
67. I. 13–10
68. II. 18–10

ochre in colour. e.g. "சீவரத்த சாக்கியர்"[69] "சடக்கொள் சீவரப் போர்வை சாக்கியர்"[70](Sākkiyas who wear monk's robes), "துவராடை கலந்து மெய் போர்க்கும் சாக்கியர்"[71] (the Sākkiyars who cover their body with robes ochre in colour). "துவர்க் கூறை மூடர்"[72] (those dunces who are clad in ochre coloured robes) "துவர்க் கூறைகள் மெய்யிற் கொள்கையினர்"[73] (those who have on their body ochre coloured clothes), "பொன்னியல் சீவரத்தர்"[74] (those with robes goldlike in colour). Note the following "துகில்மூடு வரித்தேரர்"[76], "துவரார் துகிலாடை மெய் போர்த்து"[77] (covering their body with ochre coloured silk attire) "துவர் கொண்டன நுண்துகிலாடையர்"[78] (those who wear soft ochre silk robes), "பட்டை நற்றுவராடையினர்"[79] (those with ochre coloured silk garments), "ஆடை ஐந்து போர்த்துழலும் நீதர்"[80] (those base men who cover their frames we fine ochre coloured silk clothes) "புத்தராய்ச்சிலபுணை துகிலுடையவர்" (Buddhists who wear ornamental cloth)-all these epics denote that the Buddhists wore an attire that was made of silk and ochre in colour. They invariably wore upper garments.

Another set of phrases would be of interesting study since they throw some light on some habits and customs of the

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69. I. 61-10
70. II. 93-10
71. I. 31-10
72. II. 26-10
73. I. 40-10
74. I. 106-10
76. II. 34-10
77. I. 5-10
78. II. 21-10
79. II. 8-10
80. III. 62-10
81. II. 107-10

Buddhists of those days. From his account we gather that their food was mere gruel (kañji) and that they consumed it in the morning times in a bowl made of clay and that they were always to be seen wandering in the streets with that bowl in their hands. Sambandhar's work teems with such references, e g. "கஞ்சியுண் சாக்கியர்"[82] "கஞ்சிகாலையுண்பார்[83] "கஞ்சி மண்டை கொள்தேரர்"[84] "மனமிகு கஞ்சி மண்டைய திலுண்டு"[85] "கண்டரன் கழுவாமுன்னே ஓடிக்கலனைவக் கஞ்சியை உண்டு"[86] (The last phrase means that they drank the gruel even before cleaning themselves and finishing the morning ablutions). "மண்டை கலனுக்கொண்டு திரியும் மதியில் தேரரும்."[87] (the senseless Theras who wander about with the clay bowl in their hands) "மண்டை கொண்டுழல் தேரர்"[88] Another interesting reference is to the fact that the Bauddhas eat their meal seated and the Jainas do so standing e. g. "இருந்துண் தேரும் நின்றுண் சமணும்"[89] This distinction between the two sects is not mentioned anywhere else in this work. But Sundaramūrtis Nāyanār in one of his hymns[90] refers to this distinction. That the Buddhists were accustomed to taking their meal seated is further evidenced by the following phrases: "இருந்துண் தேரர்"[91]

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82. III. 89-10
83 ii. 59-10
84. III. 37-9
85. II. 84-10
86. I. 67-10
87. I. 70-10
88. II. 94-10
89. I. 99-10
90. *Sundarar Tēvāram,* Hymn on Tiruvāḷkoḷiputtūr Śaiva Siddhānta Mahāśamājam Edition), p. 120.
91. I.71-10

"இருந்துணும் தேரும்"[92]. Another peculiar custom of the Buddhists, viz. eating their meal before noon is also brought to our notice.[93] They were also highly proficient in Tarkavidya or science of logic and hence they were skilled in debates.[94] A set of names generally borne by Buddhists is also to be seen in one of Sambandhar's verses.[95]

Sambandhar characterises the utterances of the Buddhists as "குற்ற மொழி"[96] (faulty words), "கொடிய வெவ்வுரை"[97] (strong and cruel words), "சமண் சாக்கியப் பொய்"[98] (falsehood of the Jains and Śākyas), "சமண் சாக்கியர் நாள் தொறும் ஏணிலாத மொழியே"[99] (the Jains and Śākkiyas who can never talk noble talks), "சமணர் தேரர்கள் நிரந்த மொழி பொய்கள்"[100] (the false speech of the Jains and the Theras), "சமணும் சாக்கியரும் நெறியல்லன செய்தனர் ... ... நின்றுழல்வார்"[101] (the Jains and the Śākkiyas who perform unrighteous and sinful deeds), "சாக்கியர் சமண்படுகையர் பொய்ம்மொழி"[102] (the falsehood of the Śākyas and Jainas), "துவராடையினர்... பேசும்

92. III. 123-10

93. "ஒண்துவரார்துகிலாடை மெய்போர்த்து உச்சி கொளாமை யுண்டே யுரைக்கும் குண்டர்"

94. விருதுபகரும் வெஞ்சொற்சமணர், வஞ்சச் சாக்கியர்" (1—68—10)

"வாதுசெய் சமணுஞ் சாக்கியப் பேய்கள்" (1—77—10)

95. "கனக நந்தியும் புட்பநந்தியும் பவண நந்தியும் குமணமா கனக நந்தியும் குனக நந்தியுந்திவண நந்தியும்" (III-39-6)

96. II. 29-10.

97. I. 58-10

98. III. 5-10

99. III. 30-10

100. III. 79-10

101. II 18-10

102. III. 21-10

பேச்சவை பொய்ம்மொழி"[103] (the falsehood of those who wear the ochre coloured robes), "புத்தர் சமணர் நெடும் பொய்கள்"[104] (the big deliberate falsehood of the Buddhists and Jains), "புத்தரும் சமணரும் பொய்ம்மொழியல்லால் மெய்த்தவம் பேசிட மாட்டார்"[105] (the Buddhists and Jains who are imposters and hypocrats and who never speak truth).

The above epithets characterise their speech and teachings as utter falsehood and characterise them as incapable of speaking anything except falsehood. These expressions demonstrate to us beyond doubt the amount of hatred that the Śaiva saint bore towards the Buddhists and his desire to bring them to discredit He then appeals to the people not to listen to what they say and not to have any regard for their teaching. See with what force the following expressions are made: "ஆதர் சமணரொடும்.... துகில் போர்த்துழலும் நீதர் உரைக்கு மொழியவை கொள்ளன் மின்'[106] (listen not to the false and misleading words of the ochre coloured Buddhists and Jains) "உடுக்கை விட்டார்களும் ... ... தேரர் ... ... சொற் கொள்ளன் மின்."[107](Do not accept as gospel truth the words of those Theras and Jains both clad and unclad.) "அறிவிலமண் புத்தர் ... ... அறிவு கொள்ளேல்"[108] (Do not listen to the false teachings of the senseless Buddhists and Jains)." "விரிந்த கூறை ... சிறுநோன் பரும் பெருந்தேரரும் எரிந்து சொன்னவ்வுரை கொள்ளாதே"[109] Do not accept the vehement words of those Jains given to small vows and who remain nude and also to the words of the big

103. II. 76–10
104. II. 39–10
105. II. 69–10
106. III. 62–10
107. III. 37–9
108. III. 109–10
109. II. 121–10

Theras). "காரமண் தேரர் சொல்லவை தேறன்மின்"[110] (Don't be misled by the words of the black Jains and Theras). "சமண் சாக்கியர் வாக்கவை கொள்ளேல்"[111] (Do not accept the teachings of the Jains and Sākyas). "சமணர் புத்தரவர் சொன்ன மொழிபொருளா நினையேன்மின்"[112] (Do not pay any regard to the perverted teachings of the Jains and Buddhists). "சமணொடு சாக்கியர் நெறி பிடித்தறிவிலா நீசர் சொற் கொள்ளன்மின்"[113] (Don't entertain any respect for the words of those who are very staunch adherents of the Jains and the Śākyas). "புத்தர் சமண் ஆதர் ... . இயம்பிய ஏழைமை கேளேன்மின்"[114] (Don't listen to the simple and innocent talks of the Buddhists and Jains). "தேரர் சமணர் குண்டர் பேசிய பேச்சுக் கொள்ளன் மின்"[115] (Don't listen to the talks of Therars, Śamaṇars and Kuṇḍars).

In all these verses side by side with his appeal to the masses to disregard the teachings of the Buddhists he also appeals to them to worship Śiva and follow faithfully the teachings of the orthodox faiths.

Thus Sambandhar's *Tēvāram* is a vast mine of information regarding the Buddhists of the Tamil country and their customs and habits. Though the other two saints, Tirunāvukkaraśu and Sundarar have made mention of them, compared to Sambandhar their references are very few and they too are not of varied interest as is the case with those of Sambandhar. Let us now pass on to see the nature of their references to the Buddhists.

Now another Śaiva saint who carried on a crusade against the Buddhists and Jains, more particularly against the Jains,

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110. I. 54–10
111. I. 31–10
112. I. 15–10
113. III. 28–10
114. II. 107–10
115. II. 94–10

with equal force and vigour was one Tirunāvukkaraśu, also called Appar, an elder contemporary of Sambandhar. In those days the present town of Tiruppāpuliyūr seems to have been a reputed centre of Jain activity and its old name is Pāṭaliputra. The *Periyapurāṇam* account says that Appar became a Jain and settled himself at the city of Pāṭaliputra and was considered to be one of the most celebrated Jaina monks. There is internal evidence, in the *Tēvāram* itself to corroborate this fact.[116] He was given the name Dharaśena[117] by the Jaina monks there and it is said that he even held disputations with the Buddhists and defeated them.[118] He was originally a Śaiva and his sister Tilakavatiyār who was also a Śaiva, retained her original faith and regretted much for her brother's conduct and all her persuasions to reclaim him were in vain. But ultimately by the grace of Lord Śiva she was able to bring about her brother's reconversion to Śaivism and thenceforth Appar, convinced of the superiority of Śaivism to any other faith took upon himself the mission of spreading far and wide the Śaiva faith and uprooting the heretical faiths of Jainism and Buddhism. With this object in view, like Sambandhar he travelled about from place to place singing verses in praise of Śiva. Like his junior contemporary Sambandhar, he did not come into direct contact with the Buddhists in argument or disputation. But his most remarkable achievement was the conversion of the Pallava soverign Mahēndravarman I from Jainism to Śaivism. Verses 145 and 146 of the *Periyapurāṇam* testify to this.

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116. *Tēvāram* IV Tirumuṟai, Hymn 39 on Tiruvaiyāṟu. Also IV. 96–9: VI. 3–7 and 8

117. *Periyapurāṇam, Tirunāvukkaraśar Purāṇam*, verses 37,38,39

118. "அத்துறையின் மீக்கூடும் அமைதியினால் அகலிடத்தில்
சித்தநிலை அறியாத தேரரையும் வாதின்கண்
உய்த்த வுணர்வினில்வென்றே உலகின்கண் ஒளியுடைய
வித்தகராய் அமண் சமயத்தலைமையினில் மேம்பட்டார்"
(Ibid. Verse 40)

Yet Appar makes several references to the Buddhists. The following verse is worthy of note. In the hymn on Tiruttarutti[119] is verse 9 he says: "Have no regard for the faith of the ignorant Kuṇḍas, Jainas and Bauddhas who take account of only of what they see"-a dig at the philosopical position of the sects which accept only pratyaksha (with anumāna) as pramāṇa.[120] In another verse he refers to the Buddhists as Śākkiyar.[121] In the hymn on Tirunāgaikarōṇam (VI–22) in verse 10 he says[122] " O! intelligent mind, do not take for truth, the falsehood of the hardy Jainas who have abandoned their homes or the falsehood of the boastful minded Kuṇḍar[123] or the falsehood of those (Buddhists) who cover their limbs with cīvara (monk's robes). "Again in a hymn on Meeyāchūr Appar refers to the existence of Buddhist and Jaina temples there.[124] Though specific references to the Buddhists

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119. "குண்டரே சமணர் புத்தர் குறியறியாது நின்று
கண்டதே கருதுவார்கள் கருத்தெண்ணு தொழிமினீர்கள்"
(IV. 42-9)

120. *B.C. Law Commemoration Volume*, Part I p. 36

121. "சாக்கியத் தோடு மற்றுஞ் சமண்படும்
பாக்கியம் மிலார் பாடு செலாதுறப்" (V. 48-6)

122. "மனைதுறந்த வல்லமணர் தங்கள் பொய்யும்
மாண்புரைக்கும் மணக்குண்டர் தங்கள் பொய்யும்
சினைபொதிந்த சீவரத்தர் தங்கள் பொய்யும்
மெய்யென்று கருதாதே போதநெஞ்சே" (VI. 22–10)

123. Who were these Kuṇḍars? It is not possible to give a conclusive answer. They might be the laity among the Jains. Nambiaṇḍār Nambi refers to them in one place as Jaina monks. One of Gñānasambandhar's hymns refers to the Kuṇḍars and from it seemsl ikelythat the Kuṇḍars were the Jainas who wore robes as opposed to those who did not. Another interpretation is also possible.
'Kuṇḍu' means depth or hollow and hence Kuṇḍar means 'a man of low character', a heretic. (K. A. N. Śāstri, *B. C. Law Commemoration Volume*, Part I, pp. 37–38).

124. "தோற்றுங் கோயினுந் தோன்றிய கோயிலும்
வேற்றுக கோயில் பல உள மீயச்சூர்" V. 11–1

are only few, they are referred to in common with the Śamaṇars and Kuṇḍars and we come across a number of references to the Jainas. For instance, see V Tirumuṛai, hymn 33, verse 10, 44–9, 58–1 to 8. In these verses they are referred to in such disparaging terms as "தலையெலாம் பறிக்குஞ் சமண்கையர்" (those adherents of the Jain faith who are given to plucking their hair), "குணமில்லர்" (characterless Jains), "கூறையில் மிண்டர்" (nude Jains), "கடையர்" etc. (base and depicable men). Such terms used by him, to denote the Jains in particular and sometimes the Buddhists and heretics as a whole, are only indicative of the strong feelings of hatred and intolerance of the Śaiva Nāyanmārs.

Sundaramūrti, another of the famous *Tēvāram* trio who is assigned to the 8th century A. D. also did his part in weakening the heretical faiths and we come across some references to them in his hymns. He calls the Buddhists by different names like Therar, Śākkiyar and so on. One of them is of interest to be noted here. In the hymn on Tiruvāḻkoḻiputtūr in verse 10 we come across the phrase "இருந்துண் தேரரும் நின்றுண் சமணும்"[125] i.e., "the Bauddhas who eat their meal seated and the Jains who do so standing" – a distinction already noted in one of Sambandhar's hymns. He refers to the Buddhists and Jains in a verse in abusive terms like "கூறையின்றித்திரியும் சமண் சாக்கியப் பேய்..."[126] (the Śamaṇa and the Śākya demons roaming in the streets in absolute nudity). Again he refers to them in another verse in the following terms: "மோடுடைய சமணர்க்கும் முடையுடைய சாக்கியர்க்கும்"[127] (To the big bellied Jains and stenchemitting Śākyas); still another verse refers to them as "குண்டாடிய சமண் ஆதர்கள் குடைச் சாக்கியர்"[128] (the Śākkiyas with umbrellas and the Śamaṇ

125. *Sundarar Tēvāram*, Śaivaśiddhānta Mahāśamājam Edition p. 120.

126. *Ibid*, p.71 and p.39

127. *Ibid*, p.111

128. *Ibid*, p.268

guṇḍas). The term Therar is used in another verse to denote the Buddhists. It says: "நன்மையொன்றிலாத் தேரர்..."[129] (The Theras who are strangers to good conduct and noble deeds). Sundaramūrthi again refers to them as "குண்டருஞ் சமணருஞ் சாக்கியரும் புறங்கூறுங் கொகுடிக் கோயில்"[130] (The Kohuḍi temple despised by the crossbred Śamaṇas and Śākyas).

By using and popularizing such phrases the protagonists of the Śaiva faith apparently wanted to bring to discredit the Buddhists and Jains and thus create a dislike for them among the masses.

These references together with another reference which presently follows: if understood properly would serve as an index to the growing hostility between the two rival faiths, Śaivism on the one hand and Buddhism and Jainism on the other. They are also indicative of the intense hatred and strong spirit of intolerance exhibited by the Śaiva Nāyanmārs and everyone of the verses echoes their real feelings and breathes the spirit of determination on the part of the Śaiva devotees to exterminate these unorthodox religions from the Tamil soil. That verse though it does not relate to the Buddhists is of great interest and importance. The very presence of the vihāras and Paḷḷis, some of which are known to have been in a very flourishing condition was an irritation to the Śaivas and this verse is strongly reminiscent of the things that they actually saw and heard and did not like. The verse says: "Is our Lord God to be touched by reproaches from these Jains who are lost to all sense of shame viz. Namaṇanandi, Karumavīra, Dharumaśēna and the rest of them, who stand erect with no clothes on their bodies like some foul-smelling hillock

129. *Ibid*, p.17

130. *Ibid*, p.114.

and mutter unmeaning formulae."[131] Such was the attitude of the Śaiva saints towards the Buddhists and Jains who in their turn seem to have risen equal to the occasion and reciprocated the hatred directed against them. Sambandhar refers to the intolerance of the Jains towards Saivas in strong terms when he says: "The Jainas who would not even stand in the direction of the wind that has touched the bodies of persons wearing the holy ashed (Śaivas)"[132].

Even after their triumph over the Jains and the Buddhists in places like Madura, Kāñchī and Bōdhimaṅgai, the Śaiva saints seem to have continued to attack vehemently the heretics and have used most abusive and violent language. This shows that the schismatics even after their defeat in some places continued to enjoy popularity and were able to command the allegiance and support of the masses, through which they were able to hold their own against the Śaiva saints for some more time. But the triumph of the Śaivas at the Pāṇḍya and the Pallava court and the consequent conversion of the sovereigns must have definitely dealt a serious blow, if not a fatal one, to these sects.

Still later by about the 9th century A. D. we meet another Śaiva devotee who is also actuated by similar motives, viz. extirpation of the Buddhists and Jaina faiths and the spreading

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131. Hymn on Tiruvārūr, Verse 9. *Ibid* p. 134
நமண நந்தியுங் கருமவீரனுந் தருமசேனனும் என்றிவர்
குமண மாமலைக் குன்றுபோல் நின்று தங்கள் கூறை
யொன்றின்றியே
ஞமண ஞாஞண ஞாண மென்றோதியாரையும் நாணிலா
அமணராற் பழிப்புடையரோ நமக்கடிகளாகிய வடிகளே"

It may mentioned here that the suffix 'Nandi' is generally borne by Buddhists and Namaṇaṇandhi here may refer to a Buddhist.

132. "நீற்று மேனிய ராயினர் மேலுற்ற
காற்றுக் கொள்ளவும் நில்லா அமணரை
(Tevaram III. 108-8)

of the Śaiva faith. He is Māṇikkavāśagar, also called Tiruvādavūrar. He flourished at a time when the influence of Buddhism in the south was at a low ebb. It is said that he travelled from place to place worshipping the shrines there and composing verses in praise of Śiva. But the shrines he visited were however very few in comparison to those visited and commemorated by the other three saints. The scene of his greatest achievement and of his consummation is Chidambaram where he is said to have held a disputation with the Buddhists of Ceylon and scored a brilliant victory over them.

When Māṇikkavāśagar was spending his time at Chidambaram a certain Śaiva devotee happened to go to Ceylon and uttered the word 'Ponnambalam' wherever he met Buddhists who were then numerous there. The Buddhists of the island carried the tidings to the king who summoned him to the court. The Śaiva saint was confronted with the Buddhist guru in the court and the latter asked what was meant by Ponnambalam so often mentioned by the Śaiva. The Śaiva devotee replied "the sacred shrine where Śivan dances and where the Chōḷa king ever worships". The Buddhist was irritated and announced in a most insulting language his intention to go over to that place and unseat the God enshrined there. With this the scene ends somewhat abruptly and shifts to Tillai where the Buddhist guru had presented himself with his company of devotees, and the king of Ceylon and his dumb daughter had also accompanied him. The arrival of the Buddhist threw Chidambaram into confusion and the Tillai 3000 wished to expel the intruders by violence but Śiva himself appeared in their dream and ordered them to send for Māṇikkavāśagar. In obedience to divine command Māṇikkavāśagar proceeded to the temple to meet the Buddhists and a great conference was held. Question after question was put, but Vādavūrar was not dismayed; he rose equal to the occasion. The Buddhists were enraged and they could neither yield nor accept pefeat. At the close of the discussion the saint made an appeal

to Goddess Śarasvathī, the Goddess of speech and learning: "How can'st thou who dwellest on the tongue of Brahma, allow these men by use of speech to revile the Eternal?" The Goddess acknowledged the appeal by striking dumb the heretics to the great wonderment of the king.[133] The king was convinced of the Śaiva saint's arguments and overwhelmed by the miracle that he wrought. He needed one more proof and told Māṇikkavāśagar that he would readily embrace the Śaiva faith if his dumb daughter were to be restored to speech. The prayer was heard and the dumb girl began to speak and refuted the absurdities of the Buddhist guru and spoke in defence of Śaivism. The king now became a devout Śaivite and all the discomfited Buddhist priests, who were removed of their dumbness also besmeared themselves with the sacred ashes and became Śaivas.[134] No mention is made of the use of any violent measures. After his triumph over the heretics he is said to have sung four of his most beautiful songs in which the note of jubilation is very perceptible.

The sixth canto of the *Vādavūrar Purāṇam* gives a detailed account of Māṇikkavāśagar's disputation with the Buddhists. The *Madura Sthalapurāṇam* contains a story about Māṇikkavāśagar. It is said that Māṇikkavāśagar converted the king of Ceylon from Buddhism to Śaivism and that he preached in Ceylon. These statements are apparently corroborated by the following passage in the *Rājaratnākari*: "When Budhu had been dead 1362 years, in the year of Christ 819 a king called Matwalessen Rājah was made monarch of Ceylon and in this king's time a man in the habit of a priest came from Jambudvīpa to Ceylon and took up his abode in the garden of the king. This king's character answered his name for he was an ill-timed, worthless person and the above named priest turned him away

133. G. U. Pope *Tiruvāśagam*, Introduction P. XXXI.

134. See *Tiruvādavūrar Purāṇam* and *Abhidhanachintāmaṇi* A. Śiṅgāravēlu Mudaliār, p. 852.

from the religion of Budhu."[135] This might probably be a reference to the story of the Ceylon king's conversion to Śaivism by Māṇikkavāśagar, popularly known to Tamil literary tradition [136]

Māṇikkavāśagar refers to the Buddhists and men of other sects than Śaiva as fools in their wisdom: "புத்தன் முதலாய புல்லறிவிற் பல்சமயம்" and calls their systems "worthless and outworn": "தத்தம் மதங்களிற் தட்டுருப்புப்பட்டு நிற்க."[137] In order to propagate the Śaiva faith he composed a poetical work by name *Tiruvāśagam* and Elliot's observation on it is worthy of note: "The *Tiruvāśagam* is not unorthodox, but it deals direct with God and is somewhat heedless of priests. Throughout this work there rings out a note of almost defiant monotheism, iconoclasm and antisacerdotalism. It may be partly explained by the fact that in the south Brāhminism was preceded, or at least from early times accompanied by Buddhism and Jainism. These creeds did not make a conquest, for the Drāviḍian temperament obviously needed a God who could receive and reward passionate devotion, but they cleared the air and spread such ideas as the superiority of good deeds to rites and uselessness of priests."[138].

Of the Nāyanmārs reputed in Tamil literary tradition one other is of interest to us viz. Śākkiya Nāyanār. As the name

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135. *Manual of the Madura country*, Part III, p. 53

136. It is doubtful whether the incident narrated in the Ceylon work refers to the incident known to Tamil literature for the latter says that the controversy was held at Chidambaram and the Ceylon king was converted there, whereas the former reports that a certain Śaiva saint came to Ceylon and converted the king there. There is so much of difference between the two accounts.

137. *Tiruvāśagam*, Hymn 15, lines 21–22

138. Sir Charles Elliot: *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. II pp. 219–220

itself suggests he was first a Bauddha. He was born in a place by name Śaṅgamaṅgai. He is said to have proceeded to Kāñchī, then a reputed centre of various religious systems, to know about the truth of all religions. It was there he first became a Buddhist. But we know that he ultimately become a convert to Śaivsim. The *Śākkiya Nāyanār Purāṇam* of the *Periyapurāṇam* testifies to this. That he went to Kāñchī in quest of the truth of different religious systems and embraced first Buddhism is evident from the following verse:

"அந்நாளில் எயிற்காஞ்சி அணிநகரஞ் சென்றடைந்து
நன்ஞான மடைவதற்குப் பலவழியும் நாடுவார்
முன்னாகச் சாக்கியர் தம் மொழியறத்தின் வழிச்சார்ந்து
மன்னாத பிறப் பறுக்குந் தத்துவத்தின் வழி உணர்வார்'
(verse–3)

That he later became a convert to Śaivism is clear from the verse given below:

"அந்நிலைமைச் சாக்கியர்தம் அருங்கலை நூல்ஓதிஅது
தன் நிலையும் புறச்சமயச் சார்வுகளும் பொருளல்ல
என்னுமது தெளிந்தீசர் அருள்கூட ஈறில்சிவ
நன்னெறியே பொருளாவ தென உணர்வு நாட்டுவார்"
(verse–4)

After becoming a Śaivite he began denouncing the Buddhists; for example, a verse may be cited:

"எல்லாம் உடைய ஈசனே இறைவன் என்ன அறியாதார்
பொல்லாவேடச் சாக்கியரேயாகிப் புல்லராகுவார்
அல்லார் கண்டர் தமக்கிந்த அகிலமெல்லாம் ஆள் என்ன
வல்லார் இவர் அவ்வெடத்தை மாற்றாதன் பின் வழி நிற்பார்."
(Verse–7)

Thus a peep into the religious literature of the Śaivas reveals to us a state of affairs where Buddhism is prevalent everywhere in the Tamil country. Sambandhar denounces them in every one of his hymns and this shows that they were so popular as to merit the attacks of the Śaiva saint. The unceasing efforts which the Śaiva Nāyanmārs took to wipe out this religion from

the Tamil soil is itself enough proof to suggest the wide prevalence and popularity of the Buddhists. The evidence so far examined does not favour the view that Buddhism was on the high roads of decline in the 7th century A. D. If realy Buddhism was undergoing a period of marked decline in the 7th century as some suggest, such strenuous endeavours on the part of the Śaiva saints to drive away the heretic religions from Tamil land, as has been evidenced so far, are quite unwarranted and a dying religion could be easily obliterated with a lesser amount of e ffort and with considerable ease. But as regards the Śaiva Nāyanmārs they had taken upon themselves the extirpation of the Buddhists and Jains as their life's mission and they had been labouring in that direction to the very last. Wherever they went they had made it a point to condemn the Buddhists and Jains and not only that, appealed to the masses not to be led away by their doctrines, impressing on them the superiority of Śaivism and appealing to them to come into its fold. In every such hymn a note of fear that a large number are still loyal to the heretical faiths is easily discernible. If it is true that Buddhism had declined in the 7th century, why such a wide and unbroken propaganda on behalf of Śaivism? All these facts taken together support the conclusion that Buddhism must have continued to occupy a conspicuous position even in the 7th century A. D. as against the popular view that the decline had become marked by that time.

It is significant to note in this connection that Sundarar and Māṇikkavāśagar who came many years later than the first two saints, make only very few references to the Buddhists and Jains. At any rate their references and condemnation of the Buddhists are not so frequent as is the case with the first two *Tēvāram* hymners. It might perhaps be due to the fact that at the time of these two saints Sundarar, who came nearly about a century and Māṇikkavāśagar about two centuries later than the first two saints (i. e. 8th and 9th centuries A. D.) Buddhism had witnessed its downfall to a certain extent and was not so

popular and strong as it was in the days of Sambandhar and hence did not necessitate any special effort on the part of the later saints.

Now we may proceed to examine the part played by the Vaishṇava Āḻvārs to undermine the influence of the Buddhists in the Tamil country. The Āḻvārs occupy an important though neglected place on the main line of the development of the Bhakti movement in India. The Āḻvars provided the soil out of which Rāmānuja's teaching naturally sprang and in which it could later bear fruit. Rāmānuja is not really as has been erroneously suggested, the 'morning star' of the Bhakti movement; that is a name which could far more fittingly be given to the Āḻvārs. The Āḻvārs are twelve in number but from our point of view only four are important for the ywere carrying on a relectless war against the Buddhists and Jains and we come across some references here and there about the Buddhists in their writings. The writings of the twelve Āḻvārs are collected and compiled under the name of *Nālāyiradivyaprabandham*. The four Āḻvārs with whom we are concerned are Tirumiḻisai, Toṇḍaraḍippoḍigal, Tirumaṅgai and Nammāḻvar.

Taking the first, Tirumiḻisai belongs to the latter half of the 6th eentury and the former half of the 7th century A. D. According to tradition this saint is said to have embraced the Bauddha, Jaina, Śaiva and Vaishṇava cults in succession and was ultimately convinced of the teachings of the Vaishṇava realigion only and so stood firm in it. He refers to the Buddhists and Jains in his writings in deprecatory terms. In one place he refers to them as 'ignorant Jains and spiritless Buddhists'[139] and in another he refers to them as "followers of the devil faith".[140]

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139. "அறியார் சமணை ரயத்தார் பவுத்தர்
சிறியார் சிவப்பட்டார் செப்பில்"
(நான்முகன் திருவந்தாதி-6)

140. "நாராயணன் என்னையாவி நரகத்துச்
சேராமல் காக்கும் திருமால் தன்-பேரான

Toṇḍaraḍippoḍigaḷ was another Āḻvār who carried on a crusade against the Buddhists and Jains. To him are attributed two works viz. *Tirumālai* and *Tiruppaḷḷiyeḻuchi* and from *Tirumālai* we can gather some of the references to the Buddhists. "The learned well versed in sacred Vedic lore would neither see the contemptible Buddhists and Samaṇars nor listen to their heretical teachings".[141] Again in another verse he says: Oh! Lord of Śrīraṅga, our ears have become diseased by listening to the series of unceasing and unbearable slander of the so called preachings of the Samaṇa ignoramuses and the unprincipled Śākkiyas. If you would only endow me with sufficient strength I shall deem it my duty to do nothing short of chopping off their heads."[142] This verse is the concentrated expression of the hatred of the Vaishṇava āḻvārs of the age towards the Buddhists. The above verses also give us an idea that in those days the Buddhists and Jains were indulging in terrible invectives against the Saivas and Vaishṇavas of the day, the reaction to which was equally vigorous.

The most celebrated of the Āḻvars and the most well-known for his antagonism towards Buddhism was Tirumaṅgai Āḻvār

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பேசப் பெறுத பிணச்சமயர் பேசக் கேட்டு
ஆசைப்பட்டு ஆழ்வார் பலர்"
(நான்முகன் திருவந்தாதி–14)

141. "புலையறமாகி நின்ற புத்தொடு சமணமெல்லாங்
கலையறக் கற்றமாந்தர் காண்பரோ கேட்பரோதான்
தலையறுப்புண்டுஞ் சாவேன் சத்தியங் காண்மினையா
சிலையினுலிலங்கை செற்றதேவனே தேவனுவான்"
(திருமாலை 7)

142. "வெறுப்பொடு சமணர் முண்டர் விதியில் சாக்கியர்கள் நின்பாற்
பொறுப்பரியனகள் பேசிப் போவதே நோயதாகிக்
குறிப்பெனக் கடையுமாகிற் கூடுமேற்ற லையையாங்கே
அறுப்பதே கருமங் கண்டாயரங்கா நகருளானே"
(திருமாலை 8)

who belonged to the latter half of the 7th and the commencement of the 8th century A. D. He was the feudal chieftain of a small group of villages called Alināḍu in the north-eastern part of the Chōḷa country but could not continue long in that position for he could not devote attention to serving the Vaishṇava Bhaktas. His love for that religion was so great that it is said that he misappropriated the income of the Exchequer for religious purposes like feeding Vaishṇava devotees and building temples and such other pious acts, as a result of which he was depried of his chieftainship. Now he began to give whole time attention to the service of the Vaishṇava devotees. It is even said that once when he could not find adequate resources to spend for his cherished purpose he took to the profession of highway robbery. Tradition asserts that he was originally born in the Kaḷḷar community and no wonder that under strai ened circumstances he took to his family profession.[143] It is also said that under such difficult circumstances he plundered the neighbouring Bauddha and Jaina vihāras and out of the money so got executed repairs to temples and did such other acts of piety. In this connection a strange legend has grown round the name of Tirumaṅgai. Once when he was hard pressed for money he conceived of a daring and ingenious plan of robbing the golden image of the Buddha enshrined in the monastery at Negapatam and thus meeting the immediate expenses. He successfully committed the theft without being detected by others and had the image melted and the gold utilised for expenses connected with the building of the fourth prakāra of the Śrī Raṅganātha temple at Śrīraṅgam. Such was his fervid devotion to Vaishṇavism.

This fact yields us an inference that Negapatam at that time must have been a flourishing Buddhists centre. There can be little doubt about that. Negapatam was reputed to have been an important centre of Buddhist activity from very early days. It served as an important sea port

143. Śrīmān R. Rāghava Iyeṅgar: *Āḻvārkaḷ Kālanilai*, pp.85-86.

for people going to Ceylon and as we have remarked, elsewhere in this thesis despite the Ceylon tradition which says that Mahendra went to Ceylon through air by his magical powers it is more reasonable to believe that Mahendra must have embarked to Ceylon from some sea port in South India, probably Negapatam. Thus as early as the days of Aśoka, Nagapatam was a well known port where there were at least a few Buddhists in those days. That Negapatam continued to be a place of pilgrimage for the Buddhists even in the 7th and 8th centuries A. D. is evident from the following: In the closing years of the 7th and the commencement of the 8th century, certain embassies were exchanged between India and China and it is said in the Chinese records that "in the year 720 A.D. Narasimhavarman II, the Pallava ruler of Kāñchī (Che-li-na-lo- eng Kia pastopa Sri Narasimha Pōtavarman) constructed a temple in favour of the empire of China; he addressed to the Emperor of China a request asking from him an inscription giving a name to this temple; by decree it was decided that the name should be "which caused return to virtue" (Koei hoa) and it was presented, that is to say, the Emperor sent Narasimha, a placard or tablet with the inscription 'Koei hoa' so that it might be placed on the front of the temple."[144] From this passage we may infer that the Pallava sovereign Narasimhavaraman II must have built a shrine inside his territorial limits enabling the pilgrims and merchants coming from China to worship and that the shrine must necessarily have been a Buddhist one as the Chinese were Buddhists, and that it must have been constructed at one important place like Kāñchī or Māmallapuram or Negapatam. So far there is not even the slightest indication to show that there ever existed a Chinese Buddhist vihāra either at Kāñchī or at Māmallapuram. But there are evidences to show that Negapatam had one such vihāra. To the north of Negapatam there was to be seen an ancient tower of three storeys and it

144. C. Meenakshi: *Administration and Social life under the Pallavas*, pp. 68—69.

went by various names as 'the Puduveḷigopuram', the 'Chinese pagoda' and the 'Jaina pagoda' and this was pulled down by the French Jesuits in the year 1867. Yule in his *Marco Polo* observes (Vol. II, Book 3, p. 336) that the same vihāra was also known as the town of the Malla.[145] Moreover the Kalyāṇi inscription from Burma, as if to corroborate this, contains a reference to a Buddhist monastery at Negapatam which all foreign travellers visited.[146] Thus we know that in the 7th and the 8th centuries A. D. Negapatam was a flourishing centre of Buddhism with a monastery in it. Sambandhar also confirms this and his hymn on Negapatam says that it was full of Buddhists and Jains. The incident associated with Tirumaṅgai narrated above only indicates that even in the 8th century Buddhist vihāras were in a flourishing state at Negapatam. Coming still later there are positive evidences to show that Negapatam continued to be a flourishing Buddhist colony even in the later Chōḷa period. The large Leiden Grant of Rājaraja and the smaller Leiden Grant of Kulōttunga I mention the endowment of a village by the Chōḷa kings Rājarāja and Rajendra for the upkeep of a monastery at Negapatam. The Tamil portion of the larger Leiden grant tells us that Rājarāja the Great in the 21st year of his reign granted the revenues of a village for the upkeep of the Buddhists shrine of the Chūḷāmaṇivarma vihāra, which was being constructed by Chūḷāmaṇivarman, king of the empire of Śrī Vijaya at the Negapatam. The Sanskrit portion of the inscription tells us that Rājarāja gave a village to the Buddha residing in the Chūḷāmaṇivarma vihāra at Negapatam built by Māra

145. *Ibid.* p 69.

146. The inscription runs thus: "The Theras and Chitradūta, however travelled on foot to Negapatana and there visited the site of the Pādarikarāma monastery and worshipped the image of Buddha in a cave, constructed by command of the Mahārāja of Cinadesa on the spot on the sea shore". (*Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XXII, p.45).

Vijayōttuṅga varman in the name of his father Chūḷāmaṇivarman. We also learn from the Sanskrit portion that after the death of Rājarāja, his son and successor Rājendra issued this edict for the grant made by his father. It is therefore obvious that king Chūḷāmaṇīvarman began the construction of a vihāra at Negapatam in or shortly before the 21st year of Rājarāja's reign, when a village was granted for its upkeep by the Chōḷa king. King Chūḷāmaṇīvarman, however, died shortly after and the vihāra was completed by his son Māra Vijayōttuṅgavarman. Presumably king Rājarāja also died by that time and the actual edict for the grant was issued by Rājendra Chōḷa[147]

Thus Negapatam was the scene of considerable Buddhist activity even as late as the 10th and 11th centuries A.D. As a result of commercial contacts with India there existed in places like Negapatam small Buddhist outposts consisting of a small Buddhist population particularly from countries like Śrī Vijaya and these Buddhists appear to have given a new lease of life to the declining Buddhism in certain localities by erecting Buddhists temples with the help of subsidies from their kings viz. the Śailendras. The Śailendra kings themselves had always encouraged such policy and as the two grants mentioned above show, the kings themselves had undertaken the building of such vihāras. The very choice of the place for the construction of the Bauddha vihāra by the Śailendras shows that Nāgai must have been a reputed Buddhist centre. Moreover the tolerant attitude of the Chōḷa monarchs and the encouragement they gave to such activities and their gesture of goodwill and support towards the Buddhists deserve to be noted here. The very names 'Rājarāja Perumpaḷḷi' and 'Rājendra Perumpaḷḷi' given to the vihāras built at that place are enough proof to show their tolerance and sympathy towards the Buddhists.

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147. R. C. Majumdar: *Ancient Indian Colonies in the Far East*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 168.

Apart from all these, archaeological evidence also testifies to the fact that Negapatam was an important Buddhist centre. Since 1856 bronze Buddhist images had been discovered on the site of this vihāras and the earliest find consisted of five small idols. In 1926 a huge collection of images was found on that spot. Most of the images are those of Buddha of the usual type. They mostly consisted of the gods and goddesses of the Mahāyāna (those of Avalokiteswara and Tārā), the faith adopted by the Śailendras who were most probably responsible for the introduction of that faith at Negapatam in the 10th century A. D.[148] It is significant to note that even now there is an agrahāram at Negapatam called 'Buddhan kōṭṭam'.

Therefore it is clear from the above references that even as late as the 10th and 11th centuries A. D. there were Buddhist vihāras at Negapatam and that the Chōḷa kings themselves actively supported them by conferring gifts on them in the shape of endowments of villages. This only demonstrates that the incident created by Tirumaṅgai Āḻvār did not affect much the the followers of Buddhism and that the town continued to be an important place of pilgrimage to the Buddhists. Now resuming the topic on Tirumaṅgai and Buddhists it is said in works like, the *Divyaśūri Charitam* that he held disputations with the heretical faiths of Buddhism and Jainism and defeated them. His invectives against the Buddhists and Jains are found mostly in his work Periya Tirumoḻi and it is evident from his references that they were a source of considerable amount of trouble to the Vaidika religions. In his references also there are no definite symptoms of the decline of Buddhism whereas we find soul-stirring appeals to the masses to give up allegiance to the unorthodox religions and join the fold of Vaishṇavism. The following quotations may be noted:

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148. T. N. Rāmachandran, in *Triveṇi*, Vol. V, p. 293.

"பொங்கு போதியும் பிண்டியும் முடைப் புத்தர் நோன்பியர்
பள்ளியுள்ளுறை தங்கள் தேவரும் தாங்களுமேயாக
என்நெஞ்சமென்பாய்"

(on Peria Tirumoḻi, Second Ten Hyme I verse 5) In the next verse (2-1-6) he refers to them as those who wear ochre coloured garments "துவரியாடையர்". He appeals to the people not to listen to the heretics.

"தெருவில்திரி சிறுநோன்பியர் செஞ்சோற்றோடு கஞ்சி
முருவி பிரிந்தவர் வாய்மொழி மதியாது வந்தடைவீர்"
(பெரிய திருமொழி 7-9-2)

"பிச்சச்சிறுபீலிச் சமண் குண்டர் முதலாயோர்
விச்சைக் கிறையென்னும் அவ்விறையைப் பணியாதே"
(பெரிய திருமொழி 8-6-5)

"வெள்ளியார் பிண்டியார் போதியார் என்றிவர் ஓதுகின்ற
கள்ளநூல் தன்னையும் கருமமன்றென்றுயக் கருதினேயேல்"
(பெரிய திருமொழி 9-7-9)

It is again evident from the *Padikam on Tirumāliruñchōlai* that place also called Aḻagarmalai[149] sacred to the Vaishṇavas was also frequented by the Buddhists and Jains in the days of Tirumaṅgai Āḻvār. This verse runs thus:

"புந்தியில் சமணர் புத்தரென்றிவர்கள்
ஒத்தன பேசவும் உகந்திட்டு
எந்தை பெம்மானார் இமையவர் தலைவர்
எண்ணி முன் இடங்கொண்ட கோயில்"
(பெரிய திருமொழி 9—8—9)

Nammāḻvār another Vaishṇava saint regrets the waste of time and energy expended unnecessarily by people professing different

149. That Aḻagarmalai was the resort of Buddhists and Jains much anterior to the days of the Āḻvārs is evident from a number of Brāhmī inscriptions discovered there. Aḻagar-malai consisted of a number of natural coverns and in them resided the Bauddha and Jaina monks in seclusion. (See Chap. I of this thesis).

creeds like the Śamaṇas and Buddhists for nothing.[150] He says that there is only one Supreme Being whom he calls Nārāyaṇa. He makes only very few references to the Buddhists and perhaps by that time they had become insignificant.

The sacred literature of the Āḻvārs so far examined does not show anything to strengthen the view that the decline of Buddhism was conspicuous in the 7th century A. D. On the contrary we have seen the Āḻvārs following a vigorous policy of extermination of the Buddhists and they had not lagged behind the Śaiva Nāyanmārs in adopting effective measures to arrest their progress. Their attitude towards the Buddhists is not like one directed towards a dying religion and if really the religion was on its road to decline the protagonists of the Vaidika faith could have afforded to be a little bit indifferent and their determined effort and their whole-hearted plunge into the contest could be explained only in the light of the strength and popularity of Buddhism during that period. No doubt, consequent on the defeat of the Buddhists at the hands of the Śaiva saints like Gñānasambandhar and Māṇikkavāśagar and the Vaishṇava Āḻvārs like Tirumaṅgai as attested to by the religious literature of the period, and consequent on the withdrawal of royal support on a large scale arising out of the conversion of the two sovereigns, the Pallava and Pāṇḍya, from the heretical faiths to Śaivism, the former must have received a terrible blow. Even after these incidents the policy of the Śaiva saints and Āḻvārs towards the rival creeds continued unchanged and there was no slackening of effort on their part and they continued to condemn Buddhists and the character of their propaganda against them remained unaltered. This in a way points to the fact that despite the reverses Buddhism continued to be popular.

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150. "இலிங்கத்திட்ட புராணத்தீரும் சமணரும் சாக்கியரும்
வலிந்துவாது செய்வீர்களும் மற்று நுந்தெய்வமுமாகி
நின்றான்"
(திருவாய் மொழி 4—10—5)

Another source which throws welcome light on the religious and secular life as prevailed in that age (7th century A. D.) in the Pallava country, viz. a tiny farce in Sanskrit entitled '*Mattavilāsaprahasana*', the authorship of which is by common consent ascribed to the Pallava ruler Mahēndravarman I, may now be taken for a detailed examination. From our point of view this burlesque is of much interest since it affords valuable material regarding the extinct Kapālika faith, the vices of the Buddha bikshus of the age and the views of the votaries of other religions regarding the teachings of the Buddha. The plo t of the work is this: "A tipsy Kapālin or skull bearer (a Śaiva ascetic of a very low order who carries for alms bowl the Kapāla or half of a human skull) wanders with his girl Devaśoma through the streets of Kāñchī and loses his bowl. He encounters on the way a Buddhist friar of rather lax virtue named Nāgasena whom the Kapālin accuses of having stolen his bowl. A squabble between the two then arises and a Pāśupatha (a member of another class of Śaiva votaries) intervenes in the dispute and at this stage a wandering lunatic appears on the scene and he restores the missing alms bowl which has been carried away by a dog and picked up by the luantic whereupon all ends happily.'"[151] As Dr. Barnett observes: "Within this loosely joined framework there is much rollicking fun of the knock about kind with no small measure of wit and humour. The characters are vigorously drawn especially the tipsy Kapālin with his unfailing flow of logic and theology and the Buddhist monk with his leaning towards wine and beauty and his desire to find scriptural warrant for them, while the damsel's shrewish feminity is cleverly sketched. Altogether the little play is a remarkably smart product of the *picaresque genre* replete with mirth and satire."[152].

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151. L. D. Barnett in the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, London, Vol. V (1928–30, p. 698).

152. *Ibid*, p. 699.

In this play the Buddhist monks are ridiculed for the very comfortable and sensual lives they were leading at the time of Mahēndravarman, thanks to the munificent endowments of rich merchants like Dhanadāsa mentioned in the play. Mahēndravarman must have come across cases of corruption and lax discipline in the Buddhist Saṅgha and these might be responsible for his strictures against the Buddhists. That Kāñchī was full of Buddhist bikshus is evident from what Hiuen Tsang says about the city when he visited it in 640 A. D and within the play itself there are references to the existence of a 'Rājavihāra[153] at Kāñchī and a number of Buddhist friars belonging to it. The Buddhist friar in the play informs us that the vihāra was largely endowed by a merchant by name Dhanadāsa. The king's dislike of the Buddhist ways is manifest in his writings and beyond satirically ridiculing them he does not appear to have persecuted them or destroyed their saṅghārāmas, for if it were so, we could not expect to hear Hiuen Tsang saying with evident gratification that in Kāñchī "there are some 100 saṅghārāmas and 10,000 priests." From the play it is clear that the Buddhist Order had probably degenerated to such an extent that the king of the land himself took the axe of reform, the axe he took being mild satire. The king in his play does not spare anybody and the first to come in for criticism is the Kāpālika. Then come the Buddhists of the place who in the name of the Lord Buddha and his noble preachings and the noble Order he had established made themselves as comfortable as possible and led an indolent and

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153. As the name itself suggests the Rājavihāra must have been built or patronised by some king. One of the early tolerant Pallava rulers might have built it. The material prosperity of this vihāra is known by the words of Devaśoma in the play who remarks that this particular monastery has heaps of riches drawn from the revenues of many other monasteries. From this it is clear that this Rajavihāra was the head of several other small monasteries in the neighbourhood.

licentious life. Let us probe deep into this matter and examine some of the references in the play which will enable us to know the exact attitude of the king towards Buddhists.

When the Kapālin loses his bowl and is searching for it, Devaśoma, his wench asks him who could have taken the bowl for which he replies "My dear, as there was roast meat inside it, I suspect a dog or a Buddhist friar has taken it."[154]

The Buddhist friar comes on the scene and his utterances will clearly reveal to us how corrupted and lax the discipline has become in the Buddhist Saṅgha. He says: "Ah! our lay brother merchant Dhanadāsa's grand charities surpass all houses, for I have got from him this alms meal, abundant in varieties of fish and meat and pleasant in colour, scent and taste. Now I will go to the king's monastery. Ha! our surpremely gracious Lord the Tathāgatha has favoured the congregation of us friars with his instructions ordaining for us lodging in fine buildings, lying on bed steads with well made beds, eating in the forenoon, savoury drinks in the afternoon, chewing betel flavoured with the five kinds of fragrance and wearing soft robes, but why did he not think of sanctioning possession of women and use of strong drink? No, as he knew everything how could he fail to see that? It is certain, I think, that these poor–spirited and spiteful-minded Elders from envy of us youngmen have blotted out sanctions of women and use of strong drink in the books of Scripture. Where now can I find an uncorrupted original Text? Then I would reveal to the world the whole teaching of the Buddha and confer benefit on the church".[155] From this we may conjecture that the king might have been induced to write such things because he might have actually seen cases of abuses in the Saṅgha. Thus the Bauddha bikshus of the day as they

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154. *Ibid*, p. 706

155. *Ibid*, p. 707

are represented to be by Mahēndravarman seem to be just gluttons provided with palatial residences in the name of vihāras, rich and delicious food, mutton and fish not excluded, fine robes which would induce them to yearn for women and wine. The younger bikshus are represented to be wild with the older members of the Saṅgha who could neither enjoy women, nor drink wine on account of age, but, however, jealous of the youngsters, not only acted as the dogs in the manger but also did them positive disservice by erasing from the old scriptures the actual words of the Lord prescribing women and wine for the bikshus.

Again the weakness of the Buddhist bikshu for wine is described in another context. The Kapālin takes some brandy to refresh himself and offers the remainder of it to the friar who by his greedy look reveals to him his readiness to drink but with much reluctance declines it for fear of being seen by others; while doing so, he licks his lips, for, the drink that the Kapālin offers him attracts him on the one hand and the charming lass by his side on the other.[156]

Again when the Kapālin, suspecting the Buddhist bikshu to be the thief of his begging bowl asks him to show what he is keeping hidden under his own arm whereupon he refuses to show and replies that it should always be kept hidden, the Kapālin retorts by saying: "Yes, of course, it iṣ to hide things in that sort of way that the Buddha has taught you to wear such long robes."[157]

In one place the Buddha himself is ridiculed and discreditted when the Kapālin says to the friar: "you ought to say 'Reverence to Kharapāta' for it is he who wrote the *Thieves, Handbook.*

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156. *Ibid* p. 709.

157. *Ibid.* p. 708.

The Buddha however, is even superior to Kharapāta in his dignity".[158]

The Kapālin again demands the begging bowl and the Buddhist friar refuses to show it and then a scuffle ensues when the latter kicks the former who falls down. Devaśoma, the maid of the Kapālin tries to tear out the friar's hair and getting no hold on it falls down. The friar gives his hand to lift her up and seeing this the Kapālin shouts: "'Look Mahēsvaras, look, Nāgasena, the scamp who calls himself a friar is taking my girl's hand ' for which the Buddhist replies: "Nay brother! Don't talk in that way! Surely, our religion bids us to have pity upon those who fall into distress.'"[159] The mild satire that echoes in this passage deserves to be carefully noted.

In the course of the play the Buddha bikshu describes some of the doctrines of Buddhism like the ten articles of discipline enjoined on the monks, the triśaraṇam formula etc.[160]

The dispute regarding the missing bowl is not decided and so the Pāsupatha appearing in the play suggests that the case may be taken to the law courts for which Devaśoma replies: "Why this man has heaps of riches drawn from the revenues of many monasteries and with it he can stuff the mouths of the court officials at pleasure; but I am the maid of a poor kapālin whose only wealth is a snake skin and sacred ash and what riches have I here that I should go into the court."[161]

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158. *Ibid.* p. 708.
159. *Ibid*, p. 709–10
160. *Ibid.* p.711
161. *Ibid*. p.714. This is a direct hit on the morality of the judicial officers and shows that the Pallava judicial courts were not free from corruption and justice was not meted out to all without partiality. That this hit comes directly from a Pallava king is worthy of note. This fact also reveals the opulence of the Buddhist monasteries.

Another play in Sanskrit with the same theme of bringing into ridicule the Buddhists and their doctrines called "*Bāghavadajukkam*" is ascribed by some scholars to Mahēndravarman. But the authorship of the work is still uncertain and some ascribe it to one Bodhayāna but the text of the play lacks any reference to its author. There are some grounds to believe that Mahēndravarman might be the author of this work also. The Māmaṇḍūr inscription of Mahēndravarman mentions the two works *Mūttāvilāsaprahasana and Bāghavatajukkam* in company and this lends support to the view that the author of both must be that Pallava king. Similarities in diction have also been traced and this strengthens the above view. The most telling evidence in support of this view is the remarkable similarity in the theme in both, viz. the ridicule of Buiddhsts and their doctrines.

In this work, the sishya, a brahmin by birth, confesses how he became a Buddhist bikshu because he had nothing to eat in his house, and how when he converted himself he was able to get from the Bikshu Saṅgha very fine robes, and alms bowl and an umbrella besides rich and delicious food of different varieties. As a matter of fact he says that as far as he was concerned what was near and dear to his heart was the large heap of choice food stored in the Saṅgha for the monks and adds that he joined the Saṅgha because of love for food and comfort. He thinks that the shaving of their heads by the ascetics is only a bread winning device. The author characterises the sishya as a misguided youth, attracted to Buddhism by the comfort that the Saṅgha could offer him. In the course of the play the sishya falls a victim to an overdose of pity and kindness for he takes the Buddha's precepts regarding kindness and pity to living beings not on its spirit but on its letter.[162] If one reads this farce fully only one thing that would suggest itself would be satire on Buddhism and the Saṅgha.

162. *Ibid.* p.33

Thus both the works contain only contemptuous references to Buddhism and its institutions, and this may be due to the fact that on seeing actual cases of corruption and degenerosy in the Saṅgha the king might have imbibed a satirical attitude towards the Buddhists and perhaps considered it the best of the measures he could take to reform the Saṅgha.

After a detailed study of the three main sources for the religious history of the Tamil country in this period (7th century A.D.) viz. the evidence of the Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang, the religious literature of the Nāyanmārs and Āḻvārs and the two Sanskrit farces, the overall picture that presents itself before our mind is one where we are justified in thinking that the real decline of Buddhism did not commence in the 7th or the 8th century A.D. Hiuen Tsang's evidence clearly testifies to the fact that in the Pallava country i. e. in and round about Kāñchī Buddhism was still strong and could hold its own against the rival sects though he regrets much for the decline of Buddhism in other parts like Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya which he calls Malakūṭa. Even in those regions the decline was not prominent but it had just commenced. There were atleast a few ruined manastesies and some brethren though in small numbers. In spite of the exaggerated and sometimes onesided nature of Hiuen Tsang's remarks, there is no reason to doubt the main outline of his account. Similarly the Śaiva Nāyanmār like Appar and Gñānasambandhar speak about the wide prevalence of Buddhists and Buddhist institutions and in every place they had visited and sung they saw Buddhists. Moreover, as has been remarked already, the very keen interest that they evinced in the extermination of the Buddhists and their strenuous and uninterrupted endeavours in persuance of that aim lend support to the view that the adversary whom they wanted to wipe out must have been a formidable one. Had Buddhism attained that decrepit stage at that time, certainly the Vaidika sects would have assumed a lenient attitude towards that religion and would have been

lukewarm in their efforts to extinguish them. But that was not the case with the Śaiva saints and the Āḻvārs who themselves had accepted that the Buddhists are to be found spread all over Tamil country in considerable numbers. That such was the position of that religion is also vouched for by the *Periyapurāṇam* which says:

"மேதினிமேல் சமண்கையர் சாக்கியர்தம் பொய்மி குந்தே
ஆதி அருமறை வழக்கம் அருகி அரன் அடியார்பால்
பூதிசாதன விளக்கம் போற்றல் பெறாதொழியக்கண்டு
ஏதமில் சீர் சிவபாத விருதயர் தாம் இடருழந்தார்"
—பெரியபுராணம், திருஞானசம்பந்தர் புராணம் (Verse 18)

The Vaishṇava Āḻvārs also only continued the work of the Śaiva saints and we see them bursting forth against the Buddhists and Jains whose wide prevalence they regretfully acknowledge in their hymns. The spirit characteristic of the age is very well expressed by the attitude of Toṇḍaraḍippoḍi Āḻvar who applauds a policy of extermination towards the Buddhists and Jains and considers it his duty to chop off the heads of the Śamaṇas and Śākkiyas. As the hymns of the Āḻvārs portray to us, the magnitude of the danger from the heretical faiths seems to be the same as it was before and hence they favoured a policy of elemination. In spite of the efforts ef the Āḻvārs like Tirumaṅgai who is said to have plundered the Buddha vihāra at Negapatam, Buddhism seems to have revived in such places as is evidenced by the two Leiden grants of the Chōḻas. The *Mattavilāsaprahasana*, though ridicules and criticises Buddhist monks for their shortcomings and brings into bold relief the corruption that had set in the Bauddha Saṅgha speaks of monasteries with vast resources to fall back upon. His description only indicates the prosperous state of Buddhism in Kāñchī and Hiuen Tsang's account corroborates this.

In the light of these facts, it would be more appropriate to regard that the decline of Budddhism in the Tamil country only commenced a century later than is generally believed and

during the 7th century A. D. it did not show any symptoms of marked decline, though in a few regions like Chōḷa and Pāṇḍya countries the decline had just commenced. Taking into consideration the Tamil country as a whole, the overall position of Buddhism was quite sound. In spite of the attacks of Sambandhar Buddhism maintained its position and his efforts to obliterate the influence of Buddhism bore fruit only a century or two later.

In further substantiation of this position it would be profitable to study the history of Buddhism in Kāñchī separately. The history of Buddhism in Kāñchi upto the 7th century A. D. has been dealt with in detail in the preceding chapters. Without going into details, suffice it to say that Kāñchī from very early days was a great centre of different religious systems and philosophies. Buddhism, Jainism, Śaivism, Vaishṇavism, each in its turn had a powerful hold on that city. Hiuen Tsang's evidence says that the Buddha visited the city and made conversions. The same source says that Aśoka built stūpas there. The former statement could be accepted only with caution since we have no other evidence to test the correctness of that statement. The latter statement could be believed for we know that Buddhism was introduced into the Tamil country by the efforts of the missionaries of Aśoka, especially in the Pāṇḍya and the Chōḷa countries and Kāñchī which was not far off from those places must have felt the influence of those missionaries. Moreover, if the view already alluded to that Toṇḍamaṇḍalam formed part of Aśoka's empire is to be held correct, Kāñchī's imperial position must have contributed to the rapid development of that religion there. We have seen that during the first three centuries of the Christian era Buddhism made real progress in the south and occupied a predominant position in the Tamil country especially at Kāñchī. The Tamil epic *Maṇimēkhalai* glorifies Kāñchī as a seat of Buddhist philosophy and culture and also testifies to the fact that there were a large number of śaṅghārāmas and mendicants of high

order. It is also said that some of the Chōḷa princes built monasteries there. Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ, the preceptor of Maṇimēkhalai lived there and represented a separate school of Buddhist philosophy. It was here that Maṇimēkhalai, after visiting the Chēra capital Vañji to know about the different religious systems, was initiated into Buddhism by Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ.[163] Buddhagośha who lived in the 5th century A. D. in the Colophon to his commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, called *Manorathapūranī* refers to Kāñchī as a centre of Pāli study and says that he was living at Kāñchī with his friends Sumati and Jyotipāla at whose request he left for Ceylon. After this until the 7th century A. D. we do not know anything definite about Buddhism in that city. Some of the early Pallava kings were favourably inclined towards Buddhism and under them it must have continued to flourish in Kāñchī. Then we come to Hiuen Tsang who mentions that Kāñchī was the capital of the Drāviḍa country and that it consisted of "more than 100 Buddhist monasteries with above 10,000 brethren, all of the Sthavira school." He adds that not far from south of Kāñchī was a large saṅghārāma which was 'a rendezvous for the most eminent men of the country'. He also speaks of an Aśoka tope there. Kāñchī was the birth place of many reputed Buddhist philosophers and logicians like Āryadēva, Dingnāgā, Dharmapāla (the Vice-Chancellor of the Nālandā University) and Bodhidharma.

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163. Even at the present day we have in Kāñchī a street, named 'Aṟappaṇan Chēri' which must be a Tamil variant of the term 'Aṟavaṇan Chēri' meaning, the street where Aṟavaṇan lived. Perhaps it was in this place that Aṟavaṇa adigal of the Maṇimēkhalai fame lived and taught. Moreover we know of another street in Kāñchī by name 'Puttēri teru' which also must be a vāriant of 'Buddhar teru'. All these point to the prevalence of Buddhism there. (Mayilai Śeeni Veṅkaṭasāmi, *Bauddhamum Tamiḻum*, p. 52).

That the Bauddhas were in existence in Kāñchī in the middle of the 7th century A. D. appears to be certain from numerous references to Buddhists made by Appar and Sambandhar. The *Mattavilāsaprahasana*, a contemporary work also testifies to the prevalence of Buddhism in Kāñchī. It speaks of the Buddhist friars in Kāñchī, and a vihāra called the 'Rājavihāra' and its enormous wealth: When a king by name 'Hemaśītala' was ruling Kāñchī (8th century A. D.) this place was the scene of a religious disputation in which Akaḷaṅka, the Jain controversialist is said to have defeated the Buddhists and driven them to Ceylon. Then again tradition represents Kāñchī as the scene of a religious controversy between the Bauddhas and Śaṅkarāchārya, the eminent Advaita Philosopher who is reputed to have vanquished them and driven them out of Kāñchī and established mathas there. Thus we know Buddhist influence being predominant in Kāñchī as late as the 9th century A.D.

The different schools of Buddhist philosophy and logic were all represented in Kāñchī. We may ascribe the introduction of the Mahāyāna in the south to Nāgārjuna[164] who belonged to the Āndhradesa. But the Tamil people were noted for their conservative outlook on things and this innovation did not affect them and Mahāyāna did not make real progrees in the Tamil country as it did in the north. The Yoga school of philosophy was as old as Aṟavaṇa aḍigaḷ and in the 5th century A. D. Dingnāga was the chielf exponent of that school. Moreover Hiuen Tsang's evidence proves that the Sthāvira school of

164. Tradition asserts that Nāgārjuna went to Nāgalōka to learn all the sūtras which could not be had on earth at that time, learnt them and returned to his country and converted a southern king and 10,000 Brahmins to Buddhism. Thus one important school of Buddhism originated and spread in South India before it travelled north. (*Indian Antiquary*, Vol. IV pp. 141–2).

Buddhism was the most popular school that was prevalent in the Pallava country.

Yet another school of Buddhism represented in Kāñchī was the Dhyāna school. This is called in Japanese 'Zen shu'. This was introduced into China by an Indian priest called Bodhidharma who lived in Kāñchī and is said to be the third son of a king of Kāñchī. He learnt Buddhism under Pradjñātara, a native of Central India who had come to the south in pursuit of learning. He went to China in 527 A. D. Beal definitely tells us in a note that Bodhidharma lived in 520 A. D.[165] and he is considered to be the 28th patriarch of the Buddhist church.[166] The Dhyāna school of Buddhism introduced by Bodhidharma in China was called Ch'an and he was popularly known in China and Japan as Puti Tamo and he had several disciples, prominent among whom was Shen Kuang alias Hui K' O. After introducing this school of Buddhism in China he is said to have introduced it even in Japan. It is said that even now there are temples to him in both these countries.[167] Though Tamil land has forgotten the memory of this saint it is gratifying that China and Japan still preserve his sacred memory in solemn veneration. In this connection it would be interesting to note that the *Talaing chronicles* of Burma suggest the interesting hypothesis that the Buddhism of Burma was introduced or refereshed by missionaries from South India,[168] perhaps from Kāñchi.

Another most celebrated of the South Indian missions to China is associated with the name of Vajrabodhi who was also a native of South India. Born in 661 in the Pāṇḍya country he

165. C. Meenakshi: *Administration aud Social Life under the Pallavas*, p. 225.

166. V. G. Nair in '*Free India*', March 14, 1948, p. 5

167. Mayilai Seeni, Veṅkaṭasāmi: *Bauddhamum Tamiḻum* p. 114.

168. Sir Charles Elliot: *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. II. pp. 44–45.

studied in Nālandā and made a pilgrimage to Kapilavastu. Then he returned to South India. Then Kāñchī had been suffering for three years without rains and the Pallava King Narasimha Potavarman implored the help of this monk who brought on rain by means of prayer. He then went to Ceylon and again returned to Kāñchī, from where, with the permission of the Pallava sovereign he embarked for China and introduced Tantrayāna Buddhism there of which he was the chief exponent.[169]

Let us at this stage pause a little and study about Education in Kāñchī. It produced distinguished scholars who went not only to North India but also beyond the seas. Of such Dingnāga's name comes first and he won laurels in debates at the famous Buddhist University of Nālandā. Equally famous for his erudite scholarship was Dharmapāla a distinguished disciple of Dingnāga, at first a student of Nālandā who subsequently became its head.

The monasteries were the principal seats of learning in the Buddhist system of education. The course of studies in the vihāras was mainly concentrated on the different systems of Buddhist philosophy and the scholars were expected to spread their religion by going out and preaching. A more special feature in the 7th century was the antagonism of the Buddhist scholars against the rising leaders of Śaivism and Vaishṇavism. The Buddhist educational institutions trained the inmates in the art of Tarka and the students and professors had to spend part of their time in engaging the leaders of Śaivism and Vaishṇavism in philosophical controversies[170] and we have already seen many such instances.

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169. K. A. Nīlakaṇṭa Śāstri: *Foreign Notices,* Introduction pp. 17–18

170. C. Meenakshi: *Administration and Social Life under the Pallavas,* pp. 225–226.

There is a view among eminent scholars that Kāñchī was the seat of a Buddhist University. The concept of a university, if understood in the sense that it meant a *studium generale* "not a place where all subjects are studied but a place where students from all parts are received", a place where educational effort is concentrated, where instruction is given in many subjects of general interest including at least one in the higher faculties like Theology, Law, Medicine etc., by a plurality of scholars, and a place which would build up a reputation more than local in character, then there is ample justification for holding the view that there was a University at Kāñchī.[171] In this connection the observation of Hiuen Tsang in the course of his account about the city of Kāñchī, the capital of Drāviḍa would be much helpful. He says: "The people (of Talopitu) esteemed *great learning.* There were more than 100 Buddhist monasteries with above 10,000 Brethren all of the Sthāvira school ...... Not far from the south of the capital was a large monastery which was a *rendezvous for the most eminent men of the country.*"[172] That this monastery was a great one and that it possesed abundant wealth are confirmed by the *Mattavilāsaprahasana.* Devasoma makes a reference, in the course of the play to the vast riches of that Monastery which were derived from the revenues of the neighbouring monasteries. Moreover it received liberal contributions from wealthy merchants like Dhanadāsa, "the Anāthapiṇḍika of Kāñchī". This Rājavihāra of the play must be the same as the one referred to by Hiuen Tsang and therefore it is evident that this monastery was not lacking in adequate resources to provide facilities for higher education. Moreover Kāñchī is reputed to have produced intellectual giants. Dingnāga the reputed Buddhist philosopher belonged to this place. He had his early education at Kāñchī

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171. Prof. R. Sathianathier, *Studies in the Ancient History of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam*, pp. 44–45

172. *Ibid.* p. 45.

and became a follower of Theravāda Buddhism there. After some time he left for North India and joined the Nālandā University and learnt much about Buddhism and in his later life he returned to Kāñchī and spent his last days there. Dharmapāla, his disciple, also was born here as the eldest son of a great minister and became a Buddhist bikshu, ripened into one of the famous Buddhist logicians and eventually rose to the rank of the Vice-Chancellor of the Nālandā University of which he was an alumnus. Besides these, Buddhist monks like Buddhagosha, Sumati, Jyotipāla and Bodhidharma are said to have lived in Kāñchī. The last mentioned belonged to Kāñchī itself and represented the Dhyāna school of Buddhism and was responsible in spreading it in China and Japan. Thus the Buddhist divines, produced by Kāñchī established all India reputation, visited many places and gave the benefit of their learning to the people there. The Buddhists of the place did not live in a state of isolation. They had close contacts with Nālandā and Ceylon and exchange of scholars between Kāñchī and these places was not uncommon. Moreover we have noted that Kāñchī was a centre of Buddhist philosophy and different schools of Buddhist philosophy were represented there and this shows that adequate facilities were afforded for the study of higher faculties like Theology and Philosophy. We also know that Kāñchī attracted people not only from various parts of North India but also from Ceylon. In 640 A.D. when Hiuen Tsang visited Kāñchī he found there 300 Ceylonese bikshus headed by Bodhimegheśvara and Abhayandashtra well versed in the Yoga and Sthāvira schools.[173] All these speak in favour of the view that Kāñchī was a Buddhist studium generale. Moreover Hiuen Tsang in the course of his narrative seems to point out the special significance attached to every place he visited. When speaking about Āndhradesa he emphasises the artistic progress it has made and this is voucheafed by the glories of

173. Beal: *Life of Hiuen Tsang*, Vol. II, p. 139

discovered by him in the local Kāmākshi temple.[175] The first image is that of the Buddha in a standing pose, 7 feet in height. (Image alone without pedestal). In view of the present position occupied by that image with the Kāmākshī temple, Mr. T. A. Gōpinātha Rao is inclined to believe that the temple itself or at least a portion of it was a Buddhist one. He says that in all probability the Kāmākshī temple was originally a temple of Tārādevī and as with many other temples of alien faith converted into a Hindu temple in later times.[176] The second image was found in the second prākāra of the same temple and the third in a garden situated near the temple. Both these images are in a seated pose. The fourth and fifth images are kept in safe custody in the Karukkil amarnda amman temple on the way of Vishṇu Kāñchī. The vestiges so far referred to are from the Kāmākshī amman shrine. But there are some in the temple dedicated to God Ēkāmbareswara situated in Big Conjeevaram. On the inner side of the southern wall to the east of the big gōpuram there are seven statues of the Buddha each of them placed in a niche. All are in the sitting posture with the palm of their hands placed in their lap. There is another figure of the Buddha built on the outer side of the eastern wall at the southern end. The figure must have been in a standing posture. The head of the image is damaged beyond recognition.[177] It may be of interest to note that the recent excavations at Kāñchī (1970–71) conducted by the Department of Archaeology of the Madras University have brought to light some Buddhist relie, including a stupa.

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175. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XLIV (1915) p. 128–29.
T. A. Gōpinātha Rao's Article "Bauddha Vestiges in Kāñchī".

176. *Ibid.* p. 128–29

177. *Triveṇi*, Vol. III, pp. 610–12

Amarāvathī and Nāgārjunikoṇḍa.[174] When speaking about Ceylon he says that the Ceylon brethren were "perfectly clear in meditation and wisdom". He says that the people of Mahārāshtra were "fond of learning". So also mentioning Kāñchī he refers to its "great learning" and to its being "a rendezvous for the most eminent men of the country". Undoubtedly Hiuen Tsang must have regarded this place as the greatest Buddhist educational centre in South India in striking contrast to the Pāṇḍya country which, according to him was "indifferent to culture and only good at trade." In the light of the above facts it is perfectly justifiable to hold the view that there was a Buddhist University at Kāñchī. That Kāñchīpuram was a reputed centre of higher learning receives further confirmation from the Tēvāram. Appar, while referring to the city of Kāñchī calls it,

"கல்வியைக் கரையிலாத காஞ்சிமாநகர்
தன்னுள்ளால்" (IV 43–8).

It is significant to note in this connection that in a verse attributed to poetess Avvaiyār the distinctive characteristics of the southern kingdoms are described thus: "Malainādu has elephants; the Chōḻa country has plenty of food; the Pāṇḍya country has pearls and Toṇḍaināḍu is full of learned men."

"வேழமுடைத்து மலைநாடு மேதக்க
சோழவள நாடு சோறுடைத்து – பூமியர் கோன்
தென்னாடு முத்துடைத்துத் தெண்ணீர் வயற்றொண்டை
நன்னாடு சான்றோ ருடைத்து" —
க. சுப்பிரமணியப்பிள்ளை, – தனிப்பாடற் றிரட்டு (1948)p.33.

Such was the fame of the city of Kāñchī as a centre of Buddhist culture. To corroborate this many vestiges of Buddhism have been found in that ancient city in recent times by Mr. T. A. Gōpinātha Rao. Five images of the Buddha were

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174. Prof. R. Sathianātha Iyer, Iyer, *Op. cit.* p. 46

Thus the history of Kāñchī reveals to us a very prosperous state of Buddhism ever since its introduction there till as late as the 7th and 8th centuries. We have pointed out elsewhere in this thesis (See Chap. I) that even in the initial stages Kāñchī was not slow to imbibe the teachings of the Śākyamuni and even then Buddhism enjoyed a special status in Kāñchī as compared to other centres. The reason is not far to seek. Local conditions in Kāñchī were conducive to and helpful for the popularity and growth of that religion. Besides, as already indicated assuming the correctness of the view that Kāñchī formed part of Aśoka's empire the benefits accruing as a result of its imperial position must have also contributed a great deal to promote the fortunes of that religion there. Subsequently also Buddhism received large measure of support and patronage from the people and rulers of Kāñchi. It is no wonder that a religion founded on so solid and strong foundations and nurtured for centuries by subjects and soverigns alike could not be easily shaken. Moreover the Nāyanmārs and āḻvārs, who championed the cause of the Vaidika religions and carried on an incessant warfare against the Buddhists concentrated their activities more in the Chōḷa country than in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam and were perhaps indifferent to, if not entirely neglect, the Kāñchī region. This would be borne out by a careful scrutiny of the places visited by them. Taking for instance, the peregrinations of the Śaiva Nāyanmārs the places visited by Sambandhar were altogether 220 and were distributed as follows:

Chōḷa country	155
Pāṇḍya	13
Toṇḍamaṇḍalam	25
Naḍunāḍu	15
Koṅgu	4
Tuḷu	1
Ceylon	2
North of Tamil country	5
	220

Similarly Appar visited 125 places which were distributed as follows:

Chōḷa country	99	(33 north of the river Kāvērī and 66 south of the river Kāvērī).
Pāṇḍya country	4	
Toṇḍamaṇḍalam	9	
Naḍunāḍu	9	
Koṅgu country	1	
Tuḷu	1	
North of Tamiḻagam	2	
	125	

The other celebrated Śaiva saint Sundarar visited 102 centres distributed as found below:

Chōḷa country	62
Pāṇḍya country	15
Toṇḍamaṇḍalam	12
Naḍunāḍu	7
Koṅgunāḍu	3
Beyond Kāñchi	3
	102

Sambandhar visited 155 places in the Chōḷa country and only 25 in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam, and out of the total visited 220 the rest were distributed all over the south. Likewise Appar visited 99 places in the Chōḷa country and compared to that only 9 in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam out of the 125 he visited. Out of the 102 places visited by Sundarar 62 were in the Chōḷa country and only 12 in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam Thus the above figures will show that the protagonists of the Śaiva faith concentrated their efforts against the Buddhists more and more in the Chōḷa country and their endeavours in that direction were only very limited as far

as Kāñchī region was concerned. Buddhism, a religion which had for long occupied a favoured position in Kāñchī ever since its inception had taken very deep roots in that soil and it was not an easy task for the Nāyanmārs and Āḻvārs to drive it away from that region in such a short time. But it might be conceded that it was they who inaugurated the movement against the heretics which bore fruit only a century or two later. Though Śaṅkara the Advaita philosopher belonged to South India a large part of his life he spent in North India and this may also be another reason for the predominance of Buddhism in the Kāñchī region.

Let us now examine the causes for the decline of Buddhism in the Tamil country. At the outset we may study the general causes that led to the decline of Buddhism in the whole of India that are equally applicable to the Tamil country also and then proceed to examine the specific causes responsible for its decline in the Tamil country.

Persecution as one the causes for the decline of Buddhism appears least probable. There is no evidence of any serious weight of the persecution of Buddhism in the sense in which one Christian sect persecuted another in Europe. On the contrary the most reliable documents, coins and inscription bear evidence of a toleration exceptionally generous on the part of the civil powers. Vague and unproven charges are levelled against the Śaiva and Vaishṇava sects that they embarked upon a policy of ruthless persecution of the Buddhists and Jains, but no detailed evidence, either literary or epigraphical to confirm this is forthcoming and hence could not be easily relied upon. As Dr. S. Rādhākrishṇan observes: "Slow absorption and silent indifference, and not priestly fanaticism and methodical destruction are the causes of the fall of Buddhism."[178] As Dr. Barth

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178. Sir S. Rādhākrisnṇan. *Indian Philosophy, Vol. I.* pp. 607–08

says: "Buddhism became extinct from sheer exhaustion and it is in its own inherent defects we must especially seek for the causes of its disappearance ...... If fact there is no doubt whatever that Buddhism has been smitten with premature decripitude ...... Many causes have contributed to reduce Buddhism to this monotonous and helpless mediocrity and it would not be difficult to discover some of these even in the teaching of the Śākyamuni."[179] The 'disregard for the supernatural' emphasised by the Buddha in his preachings was one such cause. A religion, which was devoid of an incomprehensible and omnipotent force above all mundane things did not appeal to the Hindu mind which obviously needed a God who could receive and reward passionate devotion. Another defect in the Buddha's teachings was that they were too abstract and subtle to easily catch the imagination of the average intellectual man. For instance, the doctrines of Karma, Nivāma and Māya were beyond the scope of comprehension by men of average intellectual abilities and there were no substitutes for them even. The doctrines propounded by the Buddha were properly understood by and appealed to only people who had attained very high standards of intellectual perfection but to others they were only making the inscrutable still more inscrutable.

Again the Saṅgha founded by the Buddha in the wake of time proved to be as bad a feature as the Hindu caste system which the Buddhists themselves condemned. As Dr. Barth remarks: "in substituting the Saṅgha for the caste system of Brāhminism, it created an institution far more illiberal and formidable to spiritual independence."[180] The rigidity and exclusiveness of the order was open to criticism. Moreover the degenerosy and demoralisation which had set in among the followers of Buddhism was another important reason for its downfall. The

179. Dr. A. Barth: *Religions of India*, p. 136

180. *Ibid.* p. 137

old order of monks who did solid work by their teaching and character had gone, their successors were of a different mould. They devoted their time more to the enjoyment of life than to acts of piety and philanthrophy. They even came to regard themselves as distinct from and superior to their lay followers maintaining a haughty aloofness and thereby forfeiting the respect of the common people. The conquering zeal of the monks gradually died away under the influence of quietism and the discipline enforced. "The modest, pious and energetic wandering monks of the early days became in course of time fat priests attached to opulent monasteries and instead of passionately preaching and appealing to the human heart, the later monks indulged in gerund-grinding and logic-chopping and in debasing Tāntric practices."[181] As Dr. Barth aptly remarks: "The intellectual powers were exhausted in scholastic discussion or lulled to sleep in the midst of idle routine and a time came at length when it ceased even to give birth to heresies."[182] The Buddhist monks lost their old abostolic fervour. "Not mendicant monks devoted to a pure life, but opulent churches with fat priests, not simple discourses calculated to awaken the moral and religious consciousness, but subtle arguments on discipline and metaphysics were now what Buddhism represented"[183] The vitality of the religion was concentrared in the order and its deterioration and consequent failure to keep up certain standards prescribed by its founder brought about the ruin of that religion. "It was to the corruptions of the Mahāyān rather than of the Hīnayāna that the decay of Buddhism in India was due"

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181. Prof. R. Sathianātha Iyer: *A College Textbook of Indian History*, Vol. I, p. 360

182. Dr. A. Barth: *Religions of India*, p. 137

183. Sir. S. Rādhākrishnan: *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. I, p. 605

says Sir Charles Elliot.[184] In certain localities its disappearance was preceded by a monstrous phase known as Tāntrism in which the worst elements of Hinduism, those which would have been most repulsive to the Buddha, made an unnatural alliance with his order. The innovations introduced in Buddhism to suit the taste of the heterogeneous followers bore such a close resemblance to the tenets of Hinduism which the Buddhists themselves were condemning that it ultimately became indistinguishable from the other flourishing forms of Hinduism like Śaivism and Vaishṇavism. The Neo-Buddhism glorified in metaphysics and theology and developed elaborate superstitions and ceremonies condemned by the Buddha. These might be true as far as Buddhism in North India was concerned. But fortunately Buddhism of the south, and especially of the Tamil country was not affected or marred by such Tāntric ideas and the conservative Tamil country did not allow any change to sweep over the original teaching of the Buddha.[185]

The general causes for the decline of Buddhism discussed above hold good in the case of the disappearance of Buddhism from the Tamil country and added to these which made religion ripe for its fall, the persistent and militant activities of the defenders of the vaidika religion were responsible for digging its grave. There is no doubt that Buddhism in the Tamil country became weak by its own inherent defects. But at the same time the fall of Buddhism there would not have been so rapid but for the vigorous and militant endeavours of the Śaivas and Vaishṇavas. The organised and effective measures taken by them only hastened the downfall of Buddhism in the Tamil country. Besides these, the wide prevalence of Jainism in the South, which became the state religion in several kingdoms of

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184. Sir Charles Elliot: *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. 11, p.9

185. *Ibid*, p.121

the south was also a special cause for its decline in the Tami l country. The Jains also figured prominently in the war for supremacy among religions in the sonth and thus Buddhism had to meet two opponents. It will be admitted on all hands that state patronage in any scale whatsoever favours the growth of art or religion and the withdrawal of it must necessarily tell on their advancement. Buddhism in the Tamil country was subjected to this 'fate and deprived of royal support she was relegated to the background.

Moreover, Buddhism was subjected ·to schisms, and innumerable divisions began to show their ugly head each professing different creeds. This spirit of disunity among its followers really paved the way for its ultimate downfall. We know from the commentary on the Tamil work *Neelakēṣi* that there were different types of Buddhism like Mahāyāna, Mantrayāna and Srāvakayāna besides Hīnayāna. Gñānasambandhar's *Tēvāram* also bears evidence to the existence of these divisions among the Buddhists themselves. In many contexts he uses the term "அறுவகைத்தேரர்" meaning the Theras of six tyes. Buddhism bad to fight not only against the external foes but had to deal first with the internal enemies to safeguard her strength and integrity. The existence of such schisms was a definite sign of weakness and it ultimately led to her downfall.

Above all the activities of Kumārila and Śaṅkara, who were the staunch defenders of orthodoxy contributed to a great extent to the downfall of Buddhism in the south. If it is also remembered that Kumārila and Śaṅkara produced a well trained and disciplined band of disciples who spread themselves far and wide in the country and that they established mathas in various parts of the country it will be readily conceded that there was not much scope for Buddhism or Jainism to gain ground in the south.

It is said not without truth that Brāhminism killed Buddhism by a fraternal embrace. Brāhminism silently assimilated many Buddhist practices, condemned animal sacrifices, accepted Buddha as an avatār of Vishṇu and thus absorbed the best elements of the Buddhist faith. Without Buddhism, Hinduism *would never have assumed its present form.*

SURVIVALS OF BUDDHISM.

Buddhism continued to linger in the Tamil country till about the 14th century A. D. and Prof K. A. N. Śāstri is inclined to think that Buddhism held a considerable place in South India till that period. After the epoch of Śaṅkara it was only in the Pāla kingdom that Buddhism flourished and in the south we hear only of isolated grants to monasteries and similar acts of piety, often striking, but hardly worthy of mention in comparison *with the enormous* number of Brāhminic inscriptions.

The Pāṇḍya king Rājasimha II (C. 900-929 A. D.), according to the larger *Sinnamanūr* grant is said to have given innumerable paḷḷicandams i. e. Bauddha and Jaina endowments, besides endowing several Brahmadēyas and Devadānas i. e. grants of lands to the Brāhmaṇs and Hindu gods.[186] Coming still later Rāja Rāja the Great, a very staunch Śaivite Chōḷa ruler, according to the large Leiden Grant (1044-46 A. D.) granted the village of Ānaimaṅgalam to a Bauddha vihāra built at Nāgapaṭnam by Śrī Vijaya ruler Chūḷāmaṇivarman. The small Leiden grant of 1084 of Kulōttuṅga I mentions the Rāja Rāja Perumpaḷḷi and Rajendra Perumpaḷḷi and in this the Chōḷa king Kulōttuṅga passes orders to exempt the villages belonging to these Bauddha monasteries from certain taxes. The Chōḷa empire during this period (12th century A. D) had contacts with foreign countries like China. The Mon inscription from Prome of the reign of Kyan Zittha (1084-1112) makes a cryptic reference

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186. Prof. K. A. Nīlakaṇṭa Śāstri, *Pāṇḍyan kingdom*, p. 80

to the conversion of a Chōḷa prince to Buddhism. The identity of this Chōḷa prince is not known.[187]

Among the latest references to Buddhism in South Indian epigraphy may be noted an inscription in the Śiva temple at Tirucchōpuram (South Arcot District) which belongs to the reign of Jaṭāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya (1251 A. D.) and which refers to a gift of which the donor was a certain Sāriputra paṇḍitha. It also mentions the Śaṅgattar and the name Sāriputra paṇḍitha coupled with the mention of Śaṅgattār, evidently the Bauddha Saṅgha, stamps the inscription as a genuine Buddhist document.[188] Again another record of Madhurāntaka Poṭṭā-pichōḷa from Kāñchī belonging to the same period (13th century A. D.) mentions a Buddha paḷḷi.[189] A tax was levied on all oil merchants in Mummuḍichōḷaperuṅteruvu and Buddhapaḷḷi is said as one of the places exempted from that tax.[190] Ceylonese history testifies to the existence of Buddhism in the Chōḷa country as late as the 13th century and in 1266 A. D. Kalikāla Sāhitya Paṇḍitha Parākramabāhu, a ruler of Ceylon is said to have brought Bauddha bikshus from Chōḷi (Chōḷa country) to Ceylon and laid that religion on strong foundations.[191] Parākrama Bāhu II (1236-1270 A. D,) devoted great attention to the promotion of learning and of Buddhism in ceylon The cullavamsa states that the king sent many gifts to the Chōḷa country and caused to be brought over to Tāmbapanni many respected Chōḷa bhikkus who had moral discipline and were versed in the three pitakas. This shows that during this time there were Buddhist works of high repute in the Chōḷa country

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187. Prof. K. A. N. Śāstri: *Foreign notices*, Introduction, p. 25

188. *Travancore Archaeological Series*, Vol II, p. 115

189. The *Mahābodhi*, Vol. 50 (1942) p. 166

190. 607 of M. E. R. 1919 (*Madras Epigraphist's Report*)

191. Mayilai Śeeni Veṅkaṭasāmy, *Bauddhamum Tamiḻum* p. 31

and that they had contact with ceylon.[191a] Again about a century later Parākrama Bāhu IV (1302-1326 A. D.) appointed to the office of Royal teacher a learned Mahathēra from the Chōḷa country. It is surprising that so late as the 14th century A. D. there flourished Buddhist scholars in the Chōḷa country and that they came into contact with ceylon Chan-Ju-Kua, another Chinese traveller who came to India be about 1225 A. D. says that the people of Malabar were extremely devout Buddhists and when referring to the Chōḷa kingdom he says that in it there was a city with a sevenfold wall and that within the place surrounded by the sixth wall therā were Buddhist monasteries where priests dwelt.[192]

The Śivagñāśittiyār of Aruṇandi deva, the pupil of Meykaṇḍa deva, the founder of the Śaiva Siddhānta system opens with the refutation of the Lōkāyata system and takes up for discussion the Bauddha religion also and treats it under four different schools the Sautrāntika, the Yogāchāra, the Mādhayamika and the Vaibhāshika. This discussion of the 13th century A. D. is a valuable record of , the state of the Buddhists doctrine as it was understood by the opponants of Buddhism in South India at that time.[193] A Javanese poem of the 14th century A.D. contains a reference to Kāñchī and a Bauddha monk there named Bauddhāditya.[194]

Even as late as the days of the Rājas of Vijayanagar a few vestiges of Buddhism lingered on in some parts of the Vijayanagar empire. An inscription from Belūr affords indirect evidence and it says that God Kesava of that place was

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191a. Dr. K, K. Pillay: South India and Ceylon p. 174

191b. *Ibid.* p. 175

192. Prof. K. A. N. Śāstri: *Foreign Notices*, pp. 138-42

193. The *Mahābodhi*, Vol. 50 (1942), p.165

194. *Ibid.* p.166

identified with the Bōdhimaṇgalam in the Māyavaram taluk otherwise known as Tiruviḍaikkaḷi (திருவிடைக்கழி). A number of Buddhist images have been found in recent times in the neighbourhood of this place. (3) Śaṅgamaṅgalam is another Buddhist centre in the Chōḷa country. This is identified with Śaṅgamaṅgai referred to in the *Periyapurāṇam* as the birth place of Śākkiya Nāyanār, who was first a Buddhist and later became a Śaiva.

(4) Tiruviḷanturai is a place in the Kumbakōṇam taluk and the existence of a Bauddha temple there in the year 1580 A.D. is vouchrafed by an inscription of Sevappa Nāyaka.[198] (5) At Kumbakōṇam in a Vināyaka temple there is a Buddha's image and local tradition has given it the name Bhagava Rishi. In places like (6) Tiruvalañjuḷi (7) Paṭṭīsvaram and (8) Eḷayanūr all in the Tanjore district, images of the Buddha have been recently found. (9) At Peruñjēri near Maṅganallūr in the Māyavaram-Tiruvārūr railway line there is an image of the Buddha in a seated pose. (10) At Koṭṭapāḍi near Ambagarattūr in the Nanni'am taluk an image of the Buddha is found. (11) Māyavaram also seems to have been a famous centre of Buddhists in those days. It is referred to in Pāli works as Mayūra paṭṭana. Buddhadatta in his commentary on the *Majjhima Nikāya* refers to this place and says that at the request of the Thera Buddhamitra who lived there he wrote this commentary.

(12) At Kuḷittalai in the Trichy district about two miles south of the railway station on a vast boulder was discovered a square entablature cut on the eastern face of the boulder, and it represents Buddha seated with attendants on each side. The lonely memorial is entirely ignored and unnoticed by the people.

198, *Madras Epigraphists Report* for the year 1926-27, p.116 and 1927-28, p. 50.

worshipped by Śaivas as Śiva and by Buddhists as Buddha.[195] Another inscription from Kumbakōṇam contains a reference to a Buddhist temple at Tiruviḷānturai.[196] From this it would appear that the Buddhist formed a very little minority in the age of the Vijayanagar Rāyas and that their institutions also equally found favour with the monarchs of the time who exhibited a remarkable spirit of tolerance.

The existence of Buddhism in the Tamil country as late as the 16th century A. D. is vouchsafed by the fact that Chaitanya when travelling in South India about 1510 A. D. is stated to have argued with the Buddhists and confuted them apparently somewhere in Āṟcot.[197]

In addition to the important centres of Buddhism like Kāñchī, Vañji, Kāverippūmpaṭṭinam, Nāgappaṭṭinam, Bhūtamaṅgalam, etc., the following minor centres may also be noted.

Besides the Bhūtamaṅgalam, a reputed centre of Buddhism in the Chōḷa country mentioned by Buddhadatta there are other places with similar names but entirely different like (1) Buddhamaṅgalam and (2) Bōdhimaṅgalam. The former is in the Chōḷa country and as the name itself suggests it must have been a place full of Buddhists. Bōdhimaṅgalam is also in the Chōḷa country and this is identified with Bōdhimaṅgai mentioned in the *Periyapurāṇam* which refers to that place as 'the Bōdhimaṅgai of the Śākkiyas'. This must be the place where Tirugñānasambandhar held a disputation with the Buddhists and defeated them. The *Periyapurāṇam* vouchsafes the existence of a Bauddha paḷḷi and a number of Buddhist monks there, and it seems to be an exclusive colony of the Buddhists. This place may be

195. *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XIII, p.260
196. 292 of M.E.R. 1929
197. Sir Charles Elliot: *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. II, p. 113

There is no legend even behind it.[199] (13) Again at Vālikaṇḍapuram, ten miles south of the Veḷḷār, often mentioned by Orme as Volcoṇḍa, there was found an image with a Jaina or Buddhist appearance.[200]

Buddhist images are found in places like (14) Veḷḷanūr, (15) Cheṭṭipaṭṭi and (16) Ālaṅguḍipaṭṭi in the Pudukōṭṭai taluk. In an inscription of the 13th century A. D. from (17) Āvūr in the North Ārcot district, we come across two terms viz., 'Mahābodhi' and 'Śākkiyar' which evidently means that in the 13th century A.D. there were Buddhists in Avūr.[200a] (18) A Buddhist image was also found at Kūvam (now in the Madras museum) and the existence of Buddhists there is attested to by the *Tēvāram* hymers and Sambandhar calls that place by the name Tiruviṟkōḷam.

(19) Nāvalūr (Ponneri Taluk) is another place in the Chingleput district which was given as a free gift for enjoyment by the Bauddha temple at Kāñchi and the grant proclaiming this gift discovered at this place bears the symbol of a Dharmachakra.[201]

(20) From Thiruchōpuram in the South Āṟcot district comes a Buddhist record belonging to the reign of Jaṭāvarman Sundara Pāṇḍya (1251 A. D.) which mentions certain Sāriputra Paṇḍitha as the donor of a gift and also mentions the Śaṅgattār which obviously refers to the Bauddha Saṅgha. These two taken together make it clear that the inscription is undoubtedly a Buddhist document.[202]

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199. *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. IV (1875) p. 272

200. *Ibid* p. 272

200a. This inscription belongs to the 30th regnal year of Kōpperuñjingadeva South Indian Inscriptions. Vol. XII p. 148

201. *M.E.R.* 1934–35, p. 76

202. *Travancore Archaeological Series*, Vol. II, p. 115

(21) In a place near Pallāvaram called Kaṇikiluppai was found very recently a Bauddha image on the bank of a lake and it was discovered that the image must have been originally situated near the present Vināyaka temple there, for, the pedestal on which the Buddha image must have been originaly fixed is found even now there and it is likely that some one had removed the image from its original position. Another remarkable find in this place is a block of stone on which is engraved the Dharmachakra of the Buddhist. The discovery of the Buddha image and the Dharmachakra strongly support the view that that place must have been at sometime past an important centre of the Buddhists.[203]

(22) At Māṅgāḍu in the Chingleput district (near Poonamali) three Buddhist images of the Mahāyāna type were discovered. An inscription of the 5th regual year of Kōnerinmaikondān Sundara Pāṇḍyadeva I (1251-64) from this place records the gift of this village to a Bauddha vihāra at this place as a paḷḷicaudam.[203a]

Ws have already referred to some important centres of Buddhism in the Pāṇḍya country like Aḻagarmalai, Ānaimalai, Tirupparaṅkuṉṟam, Virasikāmaṇi etc., in chapter I when dealing with the earliest known lythic records of the Tamil country.

While thus the whole of the Tamil country was for a long time under the spell of the Bauddha and Jaina religions, Travancore which itself was a part of Tamilnad even as late as the days of Chēramān Perumāḷ, the Śaiva saint of the 9th century A. D. was equally, if not more under their influence. The archaeological remains in Travancore bear eloquent testimony to the prevalence of Buddhism there. The religion was very firmly established in the very centre of Malabar in a place called Srī Mūlavāsam where there was a celebrated temple

203. Mayilai Śeeni. Veṅkaṭasāmi, *Bauddamum Tamiḻum*

203a. Topographical list of Inscription in the Madras Presidency-Vol. I. 783.

to the Buddha. But the remains of this temple have been washed away by sea.[204] This temple was in a flourishing condition in the reign of the Āy King Vikramāditya Varaguṇa i. e. third quarter of the 9th century A. D. and he had granted extensive landed property to this temple. This inscription, making the said grant, contains a direct and clear reference to the prevalence of Buddhism in South Travancore. This inscription invokes the Buddha (Śuddhodhani) Dharma and the Saṅgha.[205] This Varaguṅa should not be confused with the Pāṇḍyan king of the same name. The inscription makes it clear that he belonged to the Vrishni dynasty. He calls himself and his subjects worshippers of the Buddha and prays to him to grant prosperity to them. The Buddhism that was followed by Varaguṇa was Hīnayānism since the inscription mentions the Triśaraṇa in the Hīnayānist order viz. Buddha, Dharma and the Saṅgha while the Mahāyānists give supreme importance to Dharma and place it first in the order.[206]

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204. T. A. Gōpinātha Rao, *Travancore Archaeological Series*, Vol. II, p. 116

    Our references to the condition of Buddhism in Kēraḷa are only incidental as Buddhism in Kēraḷa is no part of our subject. Here an attempt has been made to give in broad outlines the condition of Buddhism there. For a detailed study on the subject reference may be made to Dr. P. C. Alexander's "*Buddhism in Kēraḷa*" Much valuable information about Buddhism in Kēraḷa and particularly at a place called Śrī Mūlāvāsam could be gleaned from the Sanskrit Kāvyu entitled '*Mushikavamsa*' (*Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, 8th session (1945) Annamalai Nagar)

205. This inscription in Sanskrit is translated and edited by T. A. G. Rao in Trav. *Archaeological Series*, Vol. XII

206. Dr. P. C. Alexander: *Buddhism in Kēraḷa*, p. 69

Buddha's images in different postures were found in villages throughout Central Travancore. One such image in the Yogāsana posture was found in the village Karumadi, ten miles from Aleppey in the Ambālapuḻa taluk and was popularly known as 'Kūtten of Karumadi'. Another image of the Bauddha in a seated pose was discovered at Māvēlikara. Another image comes from Bharaṇikkāvu and it is very elegantly executed and the Buddha is shown in the usual meditative posture. Yet another comes form Paḷḷikkal in the Kunnathūr taluk. This image is in the Padmāsana pose. The image is popularly known as "Paḷḷikkal Puthrachon", perhaps a corruption of the term "Buddhar achen" or Buddha priest. Buddha's images have also been found in places like Kiḷiroor and Nilampērūr. The majority of the Buddhist images were found in Central Travancore and the fact that so many Buddhist images were found in one small grographical area leads us to the obvious conclusion that Central Travancore was a strong centre of Buddhists.

CHAPTER 5

Influence of Buddhism.

A religion like Buddhism that had flourished so long admits the Tamil people is bound to leave some permanent traces of its influence over the life and habits of the people. The study that we have so far made about the history of Buddhism in the Tamil country would prove to be an incomplete one if we do not assess the influence of that religion on different aspects of Tamil life and thought. Let us, therefore, attempt in this chapter to analyse the influence of Buddhism.

It is a generally accepted fact that Buddhism had influenced the Vedic religion to a considerable extent and Prof. Altekar aptly states that "the growth and the development of Hindu religion and philosophy, literature and social customs, art and architecture have been profoundly influenced by the Buddhistic movement." The Neo-Hinduism that emerged victorious from the whirlpool of controversy had, after conturies of contact with Buddhism, considerably modified itself in principles and practice and purged itself of some of the latent defects, and incorporated in itself the most appealing and practicable tenets of Buddhism. The Neo-Hinduism was so moulded that the Hindu revivalists were successful in bringing the religion again to a position of predominance. Among the reformists who contributed to the revival of Hinduism Śaṅkara's name occupies the foremost place

It was he who infused new vigour and life into that religion which was fast sinking into unimportance, He was the product of an age which was profoundly influenced by the Buddhist religion and belonged to a place which for long had been a reputed centre of Buddhism. It is generally believed that Śaṅkara flourished in the 9th century A. D. and tradition says that he was born in a Namboodri family at Kālaḍi in North Travancore. He was the disciple of Govindapāda who in his turn was the disciple of Gauḍapāda. Gauḍapāda lived in an age when Buddhism was spread far and wide in the south. He was very familiar with the Buddhist doctrines and his liberal outlook enabled him to accept some of its best tenets and adopt them in his teachings. It is believed by some scholars that Gauḍapāda was himself a Buddhist. According to some critics "Gauḍapāda gives a vedāntic adaptation of the Buddhist Śūnyavāda" (Sir S. Rādhākṛishṇan) and Das Gupta goes a step further and says that "there is sufficient evidence in his kārikās for thinking that he was possibly himself a Buddhist, and considered that the teachings of the Upanishads tallied with those of Buddha."[1] It was Gauḍapāda who taught Śaṅkara the main principles of the Advaita system, of which he later became the chief expoonent. An anyalysis of the teachings of Śaṅkara would clearly point to us the extent to which Buddhism has influenced Śaṅkara's teachings. The influence of Buddhism, particularly the Yogāchāra and Mādhyamika schools on the Advaita system is indeed profound. Śaṅkara was called by his theological opponents a "Pracchanna Bauddha" or

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1. *Proceedings of the 8th Oriental Conference*, Mysore (1935), pp. 369–70. The grounds for such assumption rest on the similarity of Gauḍapāda's philosophy to the Vijñānavāda of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu and more particularly to the Sūnyavāda of Nāgārjuna and secondly on the use by Gauḍapāda of Buddhist terminology and dialectics and lastly on the references to to the Buddha in Chapter IV of the *Kārikās*.

"crypto Buddhist", "a Buddhist in disguise" and his Advaita system very remarkably resombles the Buddhist nihilism of Nāgārjuna. The attributeless God, "Nirguṇabrahman' of Śaṅkara is no better than the 'No God' of Buddha.[2] Śaṅkara was a keen student of the Mādhyamika school and he found a flaw in that system. It insisted that everything is void. Bnt Śaṅkara rejected it and created a positive entity and named it 'Brahma'. As opposed to the docirine of 'negative void' of Nāgārjuna Śaṅkara propounded that 'Brahman' alone is true and the Supreme Being in this Universe, and that the world it false and the Jīvas have no existence as apart from the Brahmani Śaṅkara's approval both in theory and practice of the monastic life is Buddhistic rather than Brāhminical.[3] Śāstras prohibited sanyāsa and hence admission of any Buddhist into the fold of the Vedāntins was impossible. Śaṅkara overruled the Sāstras and throw open the gates of Hinduism to Buddhists, who, with their ascetic robes were freely admitted into it without any necessity to undergo any change either in their outward equipment or in their mental outlook. Thus monasticism as a bar to entry into Hinduism was removed by Śaṅkara. In Śaṅkara's 'Māya' doctrine and conception of 'Moksha' the Buddhist influence is easily discernible. Dr. Rādhākṛishnan says: "Śaṅkara's conception of Moksha (freedom) is not much different from the Buddhistic view of 'Nirvāṇa'. If we introduce the reality of an absolute 'Brahman' into early Buddhism we find the Advaita Vedānta again"[4]. The doctrine of Māya and the distinction between higher and lower truth which are of cardinal importance in Śaṅkara's philosophy

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2. *Proceedings of the 7th Oriental Conference*, Baroda 1933, p. 369.

3. Sir Charles Elliot: *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol. II, p.211

4. Sir S. Rādhākṛishṇan, *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. II, p. 473.

receive only dubious support from the Upanishads but are practically indentical with the teachings of the Mādhyamika school of Buddhism. In the Padma Purāṇa Īsvara is said to have declared to Pārvathī: The theory of Māya is a false doctrine, a disguised form of Buddhism; I myself, O! Goddess! propounded this theory in the Kaliyuga in the form of a Brāhmin. "'The concluding words of Śiva in the Padma Purāṇa are to the effect that 'that great system, the māya theory is not supported by the Veda, though it contains the truths of the Veda.'"[5]

It is therefore clear that Śaṅkara had incorporated some of the Buddhist doctrines like Māya and monasticism into his Advaita philosophy and similarities between the two exist but this is not surprising in view of the fact that both these systems had for their background the *Upanishads*. Though Śaṅkara must have been mainly inspired by the teachings of the Upanishads in propounding his Advaita philosophy there is no denying of the direct influence of Buddhism on him. The Hinduism of his days was full of defects which exposed that religion to the criticism of the Buddhist propagandists, and he realised that only by rectifying those defects he could restore that religion to a position of prristine glory. So in the process of reviving that religion he also purified it and he possessed such a keen intellect and broad mind that he never hesitated to assimilate the good things in Buddhism without indentifying himself with that religion.

In addition to such points of doctrine there are affinities in phraseology which point unmistakably to the influence of Buddhism. The use of the word 'Dharma' for a thing or entity, 'samvriti' for relative knowledge and 'samghata' for 'objective

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5. *Ibid.*·p. 471

existence' is peculiary Buddhistic.[6] Again the instituting of a monastic order by Śaṅkara reveals the Buddhist influence. In practical religion he clearly felt the need for discipline and a common standard. He knew well that the strength of Buddhism of his days lay in its morality, its relative freedom from superstition and above all its eccelesiastical organisation. So he also instituted an order of ascetics analogous to the Saṅgha of the Buddhists and in doing so "he was not only trying to obtain for Hinduism the disciplinary advantages of the Buddhist church but also to break through the rule prescribing that a Brāhmin must first be a householder and only late in life devote himself entirely to religion."[7] Thus Śaṅkara is said to have established four maths.

Besides the Advaita philosophy of Śaṅkara, which bears the stamp of Buddhist influence there are many other features of Brāhminism that must have been borrowed from Buddhism. For instance, Brāhminism has accepted Buddha as an avatār of Vishṇu. While thus a section of the Hindus, the Vaisṇavites have accepted Buddha as their God, the other section viz. the Śaivites have also accepted Buddha to be their God, but in a different way. Aiyanār who is also called Hariharaputra and Śāstā, the chief male deity among the village gods, whose worship is very popular in the rural parts of the Tamil country is supposed to be originally a Buddhist God, and after the decline of Buddhism there, is generally believed to have been gradually incorporated in the Hindu pantheon. As a result of the decline of Buddhism the worship of such minor deities was neglected and the temples left uncared for, and Hindus seem to have taken up the worship of these deities under different

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6. *Ibid.* p. 465. Poussin has cited some verbal similarities between the Gauḍapādakārikās and Buddhist works, and they show that Gauḍapāda had not only used the phraseology of Nāgārjuṅa but imitated him in style and mannerisms also. (*Proceedings of the 8th Oriental Conference*, Mysore, 1935, p. 373

7. Sir Charles Elliot: *Hinduism and Buddhism*, Vol.II, p.209

names. But the arguments advanced in favour of this view are far fetched and the whole matter requires further investigation before it is couclusively proved that Aiyanār was originally a Buddhist deity.[8] In Travancore analogous to the Aiyanār of the Tamil country, there is Śāstā worship and this Śāstā is considered to be a Hinduised form of Buddha.[8a] Again on this question also opinion is divided and it is difficult to subscribe to the view that Śāstā is a form of the Buddha. It is significant to note here that some of the synonyms given to Buddha in the lexicon *Amarakōśa* strongly support the view that these village deities must have been originally Buddhist gods. For instance, the following synonyms may be noted: Śāstā, Muni, Munīndra, Vināyaka, Dharmarāja etc.[9] So also the minor female deities like Maṇimēkhalā, Tārādevī which were worshipped by the Buddhists were slowly absorbed in the Hindu pantheon and given different names. It is believed by some scholars that the Annapūraṇi amman shrine situated within the Kāmākshi amman temple at Kāñchī and worshipped by Hindus is nothing but the temple of Maṇimēkhalai and the Goddess Kāmākshi amman herself is considered to be Goddess Tārā of the Buddhists.[10]

Again another feature where Buddhist influence could be tiaced is the condemnation of animal sacrifice by the Hindus. Ahimsa was one of the fundamental teachings of the Buddha who prohibited killing of animals even for sacrificial purposes. But the Hindus who were staunch believers in the efficacy of Yāgas considered animal sacrifice as an essential part of the

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8. For further details see Prof. V. Nārāyaṇa Piḷḷai's article in the *K. V. Raṅgaśwāmy Iyeṅgar Commemoration Volume* and also the *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* Third Session 1938, pp. 230–240.

8a. For a detailed study of Śāstā worship, see Chap. VII, pp. 109–22 of Dr. P. C, Alexander's *'Buddhism in Kēraḷa'*.

9. *Ibid.* p. 114

10. Mayilai Śeeni Veṅkaṭasāmi: *Bauddhamum Tamiḻum*, pp.76-77

Yāga. But as a result of centuries of contact with the Buddhists they were influenced in this respect by the teachings of the Buddha and the reformed Hinduism now abjured animal sacrifice and sacrifices began to decrease in number.

It would be interesting to point out some of the salient features of Pallava administration which bear very close resemblance to the administrative pattern evolved by the Buddhists, especially the Saṅgha administration. It is noteworthy that the Buddhist influence has penetrated even into this sector.

To enable us to point out the influence of Buddhism on Pallava and Chōḷa rural administration a detailed survey of the salient features of Pallava and Chōḷa rural administration becomes indispensable. At the outset it is worthy of note that "while the central administration seems in essence to be administration which has very considerable analogy to the administration of the head quarters, as in the *Arthaśāstra* generally, we see there is a considerable development in rural administration for which perhaps it would be difficult to find analogies in the *Arthśastra*." The central government is very much like that projected in the *Arthaśāstra* and the local government is of a more indigenous character which had attained a high degree of develpment.[11] It is hard to find out any feature in the central administration of the Pallavas which bears a distinct resemblance to the Buddhist type of administration, especially that based on the Saṅgha form of administrtion, while in the local government with its characteristic committee system may be traced the influence of Buddhism.

It is a generally accepted fact that the committee system of rural administration which reached the climax of its development under the Chōḷas was not altogether an innovation of the Chōḷas, but existed even in the later Pallava days for which we posses

11. Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar. *Evolution of Hindu Administrative Institutions in South India*, p. 129

good evidence, and reached the highest degree of development by gradual stages under the Chōḷas. This was due to the fact that the Chōḷas, possessed as they were of adequate imperial resources and necessary strength to maintain peace and order in the state, were able to devote their attention to problems of administration. But the fact that the Pallavas paved the way for the ultimate glory of the committee system under the Chōḷas should not be missed. The general presumption that the Committee system of rural administration came into vogue in South India only in the first half of the 10th century A. D. is erroneous and a careful scrutiny of the Tamil records of the Pallavas will testify to the fact that the village committees existed as early as the middle of the century A.D.[12] The multifarious activities of several large villages since the time of Nandivarman Pallavamalla were carried on by Vāriyams and Gaṇas. Uttiramērūr Chaturvēdimaṅgalam Avaninārāyaṇa Chaturvēdimaṅgalam, Maṇali, Tiruvoṟṟiyūr, Kūṟam, Tiruvippurambēḍu, Anbil, Veṇkunṟam, Tirukkōilūr and Ukkal were some of the villages that were administered by committees in later days of Pallava rule.[13] Rural administration by Sabhas was prevalent in the Pallava period in the following places, Uttiramērūr, Tiruvippurambēḍu, Peruṅguḷi, Kūram, Veṇkunṟam, Viḍēlviḍugu Chaturvēdimaṅgalam, Anbil, Perumbuliyūr, Maṇali: Avaninārāyaṇa Chaturvēdimaṅgalam, Śiyapuram, Muṭṭai, Pulvanūr, Teṅgaṅguḍi, Tiruttaṇi, Adambākkam and Ukkal.[14] The inscriptions from these places testifying to the prevalence of this type of rural administration all belong to the 8th and 9th centuries A. D. which represent a period when the committee system was in its embryonic stage.

A clear insight into the actual working of this system may

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12. C. Mīnākshi: *Op.cit*, pp. 125–126
13. *Ibid.* p. 126
14. *Ibid*, p. 125, footnote 13

be had from a close study of some of the inscriptions and the Uttiramērūr inscription revealing the type of administration in the village of Uttiramērūr in the Chingleput district is a typical instance in point. But before examining that inscription it may be pointed out that this system does not seem to be uniformly spread over the whole of the Tamil country. On the other hand we find it concentrated in particular localities especially in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam. The predominance of the activity of the Mahāsabha in the Toṇḍamaṇḍalam region has very well been illustrated with facts and figures by Prof. R. Sathianātha Iyer in his "*Studies in the Ancient History of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam*".[15] The total number of the inscriptions taken for study, referring to the Mahāsabha and its activities belonging to a period ranging between the later Pallavas, under whose favourable auspices it originated, and the Chōḻas of Tanjore and Gaṅgaikoṇḍachōḻapuram, under whom it attained the zenith of its progress (i. e. from the 8th to the 13th centuries A.D.) is 646 and a close scrutiny of their distribution would reveal to us the predominance of such institutions in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam. Out of the 646 inscriptions there are 307 belonging to Toṇḍamaṇḍalam distributed like this:

Chingleput district...	137
North Āṟcot and Chittoor	72
South Āṟcot and Poṇḍicerrry	98
Total	307

234 belonging to Tanjore, 66 to Trichinopoly and Pudukōṭṭai, 1 to Madura, 16 to Tinnevelly, 8 to Travancore, 4 to Salem and 10 to Mysore, thus making up the total to 300 for the whole of Chōḻamaṇḍalam (234 plus 66; 25 for the Pāṇḍya country (1 plus

15. Prof. R. Sathinātha Iyer: *Studies in the Ancient History of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam*, pp. 27-29

16 plus 8) and 14 for the Koṅgu and Kannaḍa countries (4 plus 10). Thus we see here the system predominating in the Pallava territory.[16] Again looking from another point of view, during the period between Parāntaka I and Kulōttuṅga I the inscriptions are distributed as follows: 233 for the whole of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam (Chingleput 110, North Āṟcoṭ and Chittoor 56, South Āṟcoṭ and Poṇḍicherry 67) and 145 for the whole Chōḷa country (Tanjore 114, Trichinopoly 31 and Pudukōṭṭai O). Here again we see the activity of the Mahāsabha greater in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam than in Chōḷamaṇḍalam. Again from the point of view of the comparative average figures for both the regions we are led to the same conclusion. The average for Toṇḍamaṇḍalam is 3.6 (4.3 for Chingleput, 3.1 for North Āṟcot and Chittoor, 3.5 for South Āṟcot and Poṇḍicherry. 4.3 + 3.1 + 3.5 ÷ 3 = 3.6), while the average for Chōḷamaṇḍalam is 3.05 (3.1 for Tanjore, 3 for Trichinopoly and Pudukōṭṭai 3.1 + 3 ÷ 2 = 3.05). A different approach viz. taking into consideration only places having 10 or more Mahāsabha inscriptions, each takes us to the same couclusion Toṇḍamaṇḍalam has a greater number. The following table will illustrate this:

Toṇḍamaṇḍalam		Chōḷamaṇḍalam.	
Place	No. of inscriptions.	Place	No. of inscriptions.
Uttaramērūr	56	Tiruvāḍuturai	33
Tribhuvani	16	Tiruppugalūr	15
Brahmadēśam	12	Tiruveṟumbūr	11
Tiruvoṟṟiyūr	11	Tiruviḍaimarudūr	10
Tiruvallam	11		
	106		69
Average 106 ÷ 5 = 21.		Average 69 ÷ 4 = 17	

Another point also strengthens the same conclusion. For the period between Parāntaka I and Kulōttuṅga I the

16. Prof. R. Sathiaṅātha Iyer: *Op.cit.* p. 28

inscriptions distributed over Toṇḍamaṇḍalam are 132 in number coming from 13 places while the Chōḻamaṇḍalam consists of only 71 inscriptions distributed over 9 places. Here again the number of places and the number of inscriptions are far greater in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam than in the Chōḻamaṇḍalam. From the foregoing the predominant position enjoyed by the Mahāsabha system of rural administration in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam is evident.

This grand concentration of the Mahāsabha inscriptions in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam (in the later Pallava period alone there were 14 places in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam where this system of administration was obtaining, and only in 3 places in Chōḻamaṇḍalam) coupled with the fact that the earliest inscription of 782 A. D. referring to this type of administration belongs to this region speaks in favour of the view that this region speaks in favour of the view that this system must have originated in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam.[17] The work don by Buddhism and democratic Brāhminism here in this direction, the existence, of a number of Chaturvēdimaṅgalams in this region where this type of administration thrived, and above all the benevolent royal policy in the direction of rural administrative progress must have been responsible for the origin of this system in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam.[18]

Let us now probe into the details about this type of administration in its initial stages as under the later Pallavas and also the perfected type as attained during the Chōḻa period, and such a study is bound to reveal to us the fact that the administration as obtained under the Pallavas was a clear anticipation of that obtained under the Chōḻas, and the latter represented the improved and perfected type. The information furnished by the inscriptions belonging to the later Pallava period is enough to indicate that the sytem of rural administration found in full working order under the Chōḻas was not altogether their own

17. *Ibtd*. pp.34–35.

18. *Ibid*. pp. 38–39

creation but reached under them the highest degree of perfection through a long process of evolution.

The source for a study of these local institutions is mainly inscriptions, and they are so vast in number that it would be difficult to take all of them for consideration. Therefore the most convenient way would he to make a careful choice of one or two localities where the administrative details are available in the fullest measure, and fortunately for us we have got such localities where the institutions are found to be more or less complete in development and at the same time the inscriptions available from such localities also furnish us sufficient details to enable us to draw a fairly complete picture of the type to administration.

One such locality is the village named Uttaramallūr, now in the Madhurāntakam taluk of the Chingleput district, known in those days as Uttaramērūr Chaturvēdimaṅgalam and it offers the best illustration by the completeness of the institutions that are at work there. But critics may raise a doubt as to whether the selection of a particular locality or a few localities would be a fairly representative sample for the whole Tamil country. But Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgar has dispelled such doubts and his observation is worthy of note here. He says: "If it is the only place where the evidence was available, perhaps the suspicion could be fairly just. But while the information from Uttarmallūr may be full because of the large number of records preserved in the place, we have a pretty large number of places, from which fragments of these records have come down to us, which give details here and there of the same character, though not in the same degree of fullness and variety ... Such remnants as have come down to us from various localities, imperfect in their nature-made perhaps more imperfect still by the ravages of time-still make it clear that the character of rural administration

was generally what it is described to be from the records at Uttarmallūr".[19]

Administration in Uttarmērūr.

Pallava period.

Uttarmērūr serves as an excellent example for the committee system of administration (Vāriyam). The earliest of the inscriptions belonging to that place referring to the Mahāsabha belongs to the period of Dantivarman Pallava and dated in his 7th regnal year i. e. 782 A.D.[20] It records the sale by the Peruṅguṟi Sabha of land to a Svāmikumāra Caturvēda Sōmayāji for digging a tank and raising a bund for it the tank being called Svāmikumārakuṭṭam. The next one belongs to the 9th year of the same king and it records a private endowment for dredging the Vairamēgha Taṭāka every month. The Sabha of Uttaramērūr received the grant and ordered that the Vāriyar at that time should utilise the proceeds of the endowment without spending it for any other purpose.[21] It is significant to note that the term "அவ்வக்காலத்து வாரியர்" occuring in the inscription denotes the committee in general, selected for the time being, perhaps the year, whereas the later inscriptions of the Chōḷa period from the same blace speak of the Ērivāriyaperumakkaḷ. The Tank Committee as responsible for all duties concerning tanks and irrigation, and thus there are references to various specialized committees entrusted with specific functions like the Tōṭṭavāriyam (Garden Committee), Samvatsara Vāriyam (Annual Committee) and so on. On the other hand the reference here to Vāriyam in general perhaps is indicative of the fact that the specialisation in the functions of the Committee, which was a characteristic feature of the

19. Dr. S. K. Iyeṅgār: *Evolution of Hindu Administrative Institutions in South India*, p. 166

20. *Annual Report on Epigraphy* (Madras), 1898, No. 80

21. *Ibid* No. 74 *South Indian Inscriptions*, Vol. VI, p. 167

Uttaramērūr administration in the Chōḷa period, was then unknown.[22]

Then in the reign of Nṛipatuṅgavarman, grandson of Dantivarman we again come across a reference to the Committee system at Uttaramērūr in an inscription from that place dated in the 16th year of Nṛipatuṅgavarman (Circa 865 A.D.). It refers to the 'Vāriyaperumakkaḷ' who were to protect the endowment of 13 kaḷañjus of gold for a lamp, by a lady Harinandi Manavaṭṭi Piḍāri to the temple at Tiruppulivaḷam.[23] When we come to the reign of Kampavarman we have clear references to more than on specialized committees very much like those found in the Chōḷa period. For example an inscription of Kampavarman dated in his 15th year from the village of Ukkal[24] mentions the Samvatsaravāriyaperumakkaḷ. Under the orders of the Sabha at Ukkal the Samvatsaravāriyaperumakkaḷ received from an individual by name Śaḍaiyan, a thousand kāḍi of paddy and agreed to supply as interest on this 500 kāḍis of paddy annually and utilise the same for maintaining a

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22. C. Mīnākshi: *Op. cit.* p. 128

23. *Annual Report on Epigraphy* (Madras) 1898, No. 63.

24. *South Indian Inscriptions* Vol. III, Part I,p.9. The inscription runs thus: *Line* 1. "Hail! Prosperity! In the 15th year (of the reign) of Kampavarman. The writing of us, the assembly of Ukkal. We have received 1000 kāḍi of paddy from Śaḍaiyan.
Line 2. We the assemply shall close (the sluice of) the tank (to collect water for irrigation) and shall cause 500 kāḍi of paddy to be supplied every year as interest on these 1000 kāḍi of paddy.
Line 3. We declare that those who disobey this shall incur all the sins committed between Ganga and Kumari. The great men elected for the year shall cause (the paddy) to be supplied".

tank.[25] By the time of Kampavarman the Tank Committee seems to have been well organised and a number of his inscriptions refer to the work of the special committee (A. R. E. 1898. Nos. 11, 65, 83 and 84). One of them dated in his 10th year records a gift of a piece of land by a member of the ruling Committee (āḷumghaṇattār) in favour of the Vairamēgha Taṭāka at Uttaramērūr. The Tank Committee (Ērivāriyaperumakkaḷ) took charge of the gift and agreed to utilise it according to the statement contained in the deed.[26] Again another record belonging to his 18th year refers to the gift of gold and land from a private individual for dredging the Vairamēgha Taṭāka which was accepted by the Tank Committee under the orders of the Sabha.[27] Yet another record dated in the 21st year of Kampavarman mentions the receipt by the Sabha of a large endowment of 200 kaḻañjus of gold by a private individual for dredging the Vairamēgha Taṭāka and in this connection it refers to the Ērivāriyaperumakkaḷ who agreed to look after the dredging of the tank[28].

These are some of the inscriptions belonging to the Pallava period which refer to the committee system in its rudimentary

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25. It may be noted here that instead of the Ērivāriyaperumakkaḷ looking after the affairs regarding the tank and its maintenance, the Samvatsaravāriyam has taken charge of the function.

26. *Annual Report on Epigraphy* (Madras) 1898, No. 11.

27. *Ibid*. No. 65. Here we get a valuable piece of information. The committee is referred to as "avvavāṇḍu ērivāriyaperumakkaḷ" i. e. members of the Tank Committee for each year, which shows that the committee was constituted every year thus giving opportunities for new men to serve on the committee.

28. *Ibid*. No. 84.

stage. These vāriyams were only subordinate to the Sabha or the Village Assembly under whose general supervision these committees functioned. These sabhas were also called "Mahā Sabhas" and their members are referred to as Perumakkaḷ. There were as many as twenty Sabhas functioning under the Pallavas and the activities of the Sabhas were varied in character. For instance, they looked after the temple its administration and its endowments, looked after the tanks in the village and the irrigation works and administered local justice and so on. They controlled and supervised a number of committees and were responsible for carrying on the administration of the village. Thus the Sabhas and its varied functions are referred to in an inscription from a village Teṅgaṅguḍi (Trichy district) belonging to the reign of Nṛipatuṅgavarman, another from Utticamērūr and yet another from Tiruttaṇi belonging to the relgin of Aparājitavarman. The above references are enough to indicate that the rural localities under the Pallavas were placed under an administrative system charactorised by the Sabha and the Committees, about which more detailed information is available under the Chōḷas. The Pallava charters testify to the existence of committees, committees of a speciallsed nature, like the Ērivāriyam. Such committees during the Pallava period are not many, while under the Chōḷas almost all the activities of the village came under the purview of such committees and hence we get a galaxy of such committees during that period. But from the Pallava inscription we do not get any information regarding the qualifications of membership to these committees, the procedure of election and Voting and similar matters about which the Chōḷa inscriptions furnish us detailed information. Thus the rural administration by committees as portrayed in the Pallava inscriptions represents a state when that type of administration was not perfected, whereas the Chōḷa inscriptions particularly those of Parāntaka I reveal to us the system in its fully developed form. In short rural administration as pictured in the Pallava inscriptions from

Uttiramērūr was carried on by the Sabha or the Mahāsabha with the help of Vāriyams or committees which were entrusted with the specific functions. Practically all matters that came under the term civil administration now-a-days came under the purview of these committees which were all of them under the control of the general body viz. the Mahāsabha. It is the larger Sabha that laid down the policy or the general principles of administration. The committees actually carried out the details of the administration. In the Pallava period we only hear about the Tank Committee (Ērivāriyam) and the Annual Committee (Samvatsavāriyam) whereas later Chōḷa inscriptions speak of an array of such committees. Besides the above two they mention others like the Tōṭṭavāriyam (Garden committee), Kaḻani Vāriyam (the committee that looked after the cultivable land), Kaṇakku Vāriyam (accounts committee) Kaliṅgu vāriyam (the committee that looked after sluices), Taḍivaḻi vāriyam (the committee that look charge of the roads), Pon vāriyam (Gold committee) and Panchavāra vāriyam (a general committee which looked after the general management of the village.)

Besides these two viz. the Mahāsabha and the Variyams another characteristic feature of the Pallava rural administration is the 'Gaṇattār', A 'gaṇa' is a group, collection or a corporation of a few men who have a common purpose[29]. In the inscription of the Pallavas the term 'gaṇa' is used to denote 'a group of people in charge of administration'. One such gaṇa is the 'Āḷum gaṇattar' the ruling committee–as distinct from the hitherto mentioned specialised Vāriyams or Committees the earliest reference to which is found in one of Nandivarman's inscriptions dated in his 23rd regnal year[30] which records the land transactions of two members of the ruling committee.

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29. *Pali–English Dictionary.*

30. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XI, p. 223.

Again another inscription dated in the 49 the year of Dantivarman refers the A to mḷugaṇattār of the village Tiruvippurambēḍu.[31] Going still later we have a reference to this ruling committee in an inscription of Nṛiputungavarman from Kūṟam[32]. The Āḷum gaṇattār of Uttaramērūr is referred to in four inscriptions of Kampavarman. The same committee is referred to in one of the inscriptions of Nṛipatungavarman by a different name i. e. gaṇapperumakkaḷ.

Besides the ruling committee or 'Āḷum gaṇattār, we know of another committee viz. 'Amṛtagaṇattār, from the Pallava inscriptions. About this body the *Annual Epigraphical Report* for the year 1912–13 says: Amṛtagaṇattār and Gaṇapperumakkaḷ are terms not met with in the inscriptions examined so far; perhaps they have to be connected with Āḷumgaṇattār who were the direct managing members of a village, distinct from the general members of the village assembly"[33]. But it seem more probable that this body was not connected with the village administration in general but with the temple and its management.[34] The earliest reference to this body Amṛtagaṇattār is to be found in the stone inscriptions of Aparājita Vikramavarman. We do not hear about this particular body in the Chōḷa period; either they must have disappeared or must have been given some other name. In a way these gaṇas are responsible to the sabha but it is not possible to obtain a detailed account of their work from the Pallava inscriptions. However one thing is clear that these gaṇas were only subordinate to the viilage assembly.

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31. *Ibid.* p. 225.

32. *Annual Report on Epigraphy* (Madras) for the year 1900– No. 33.

33. *Annual Report on Epigraphy,* 1912–13, p. 90

34. C. Mīnākshi: *Op. cit.* p. 132.

Now we shall pass on to the study of rural administration as prevailed under the Chōḷas and the most considerable clear light on the system of rural administration thrown by the two celebrated Uttaramērūr inscriptions belonging to the reign of Parāntaka I. In the first place the inscriptions refer to a number of committees each of which is given a specific name indicating roughly the sphere of work allotted to it, and secondly, they deal elaborately with the method of selection to these committees and lay down the qualifications determining the eligibility for selection as a committee member, and thirdly they give a list of persons who are disqualified from being selected to anyone of these committees.

As during the Pallava age, the general administration of the village was in the lands of a powerful assembly or the Mahāsabha. Administrative work in the village was done under its direction and according to its instructions. Whereas the general principles of administration were laid down by the Mahāsabha, for administrative convenience, the details of the administration were carried out by a certain number of small bodies, the Vāriyams which were very few in number during the Pallava age but which had now considerably increasad in number, and from the Uttaramērūr inscription we know of as many as eight to ten such committees. They are: (1) Samvatsara Vāriyam (Annual committee) seems to be the most important, influential and dignified of all committees since the election to this committee precedes that of all the other committees and since the persons constituting this commit tee are not ordinary persons. Only those who had previously served on the garden and tank committees, and those who are advanced in age are alone eligible to be elected to these committees. Thus it consisted of men of ripe old age, vast experience and learning and nature wisdom. The number of members of this committee was fixed at twelve.

(2) *Tōṭṭa Vāriyam* (Garden committee) looked after the gardens and the number of members of this committee was likewise fixed at twelve.

(3) *Ēri Vāriyam* (Tank Committee). The number of members was six. The function of this committee is quite apparent from its name. Its functions are enumerated in detail in numerous inscriptions. It looked after all the endowments made in favour of tanks and also looked after the maintenance of these tanks.

( ) *Pon Vāriyam* (Gold committee). The number of members was fixed at six and it probably regulated the currency

(5) *Kaḷani Vāriyam.* This committee looked after the cultivable lands.

(6) *Panchāvāra Vāriyam.* The number of members was six. Prof. Kielhorn translates 'Panchavāra Vāriyam' as committee of five.[35] But on the other hand, it consisted of six and so this translation is not acceptable. Perhaps it meant that this committee supervised the work of five committees of the village. Possibly originally there were only five committees in a village and later on the number might have been increased. Even after this alteration the original name of this committee seems to have remained unaltered.[36] But this interpretation of Mr. Venkayya needs some reconsideration in view of the fact that pancha-vāra is also included as one among the various kinds of dues payable on land by the tenants (vide A. R. E. 1912-13, No. 131) in which case Panchavāra vāriyam may mean the committee appointed to collect the panchavāra dues.[37]

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35. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol.V, p. 138, Note 7.
36. Veṅkayya: *Archaeological Survey Report*, 1904-5, p. 145.
37. Prof. R. K. Mookerji: *Local Government in Ancient India*, p. 153.

Also Panchavāra Vāriyam may mean a committee which meets frequently or a standing committee for Panchavāra means five times or five days or always, 'pancha' indicating width of time.[38]

(7) *Kaliṅgu* Vāriyam, the committee that looked after the sluices.

(8) *Kaṇakku Vāriyam* the committee that looked after the accounts

(9) *Taḍivaḻi Vāriyam*: the committee that looked after the roads and their maintenance.

(10) *Committee for supervision of justice.* The duty of this committee seems to have been to supervise the justice or fairness of the annual elections of the various committees.

These are the committees that functioned during the Chōḷa period so far as we know from the inscriptions of that perid. The exact number of these committees depended on the complicated interests of each locality, and in accordance with the needs of each locality the number of the committees either increased or decreased. Thus inscriptions found at Tiruppāṟkaḍal near Kāvēripak in the North Ārcot District furnish the names of five other committees.[39] viz.

(1) the wards committee

(2) the fields committee

(3) the committee of 200

(4) the village committee, and

(5) the udāsina committee.

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38. Prof. R. Sathianātha Iyer, *Studies in the Ancient History of Toṇḍamaṇḍalam*, p. 32-33.

39. *Annual Report on Epigraphy* (Madras) for the year 1904-5 Part II, Para 7.

Now let us proceed to examine the procedure of election to these committees. The procedure is clearly in record and has been brought upto date in the two inscriptions of Parāntaka I belonging to his 12th and 14th years (919 and 921 A. D.). The latter is definitely an improvement on the former and is an important record as it introduces the *Kuḍavōlai* system of election For purposes of selection to these committees the village was devided into thirty wards or electoral units. The residents of each ward assembled together and each of them was required to write down on a ticket the name of the person whom he wanted to select, due regard being had to the eligibility of the candidate to serve on the committee in accordance with the rules and regulations framed by the General Assembly. The tickets were then arranged in separate packets corresponding to the thirty wards. Each packet bore the name of the ward it represented. All these packets were put into an empty pot. This pōt was placed before a full meeting of the Great Assembly, when all the members, young and old alike, (the term used is Tiruvaiyār and seems to be a respectable reference to the general body), as also the temple priests (nambimār) who happened to be in town on that day met in the inner pavilion in the Mahāsabha. Among the temple priests assembled there, an old priest stood up, lifted that pot so as to be seen by all people, one of the young boys who could not see the difference between things even by day was then asked to pick out one of the packets. The tickets in that packet were then transferred to another empty pot and shuffled thoroughly. The boy then picked up one ticket out of the pot and placed it in the hands of the arbitrator (madhyasta). While receiving that ticket the arbitrator should receive it in the palm of his hand with his five fingers spread out. He read out the name on the ticket thus received. The name thus read out by him was also read out by all the temple priests present in the inner pavilion. The name so read was written down and accepted. Thirty names were to be chosen in this manner

representing the thirty wards.

It is argued whether the lot system which involves merely a mechanical procedure as against voting by ballot would ensure the return of really honest and comptetent personnel. It may be pointed out that strict conformity to certain prescribed conditions of eligibility for membership produced, for all practical purposes, approximate uniformity of comptence and capacity in persons so selected. The conditions of eligibility were a sufficient safeguard against the return of a really unqualified and undesirable person and by taking care to prescribe certain qualifications as a *sine qua non* for election to any of the rcommittees, Uttaxamerur avoided the pit falls of the lot system.

From among the thirty thus chosen, those who had been previously on the garden committee and on the tank committee, those who are advanced in learning and age were chosen for the annual committee (Samvatsara Vāriyam). In regard to the other two committees viz. garden committee and the tank committee, the selection was made on the basis of the qualifications required for the work and this part of the work was done by the oral exprsssion of opinion ('showing the karai', 'Kırai kāṭṭi'). The Samvatsara Vāriyam consisted of twelve members and likewise the garden committee consisted of twelve members and the tank committee consisted of the remaining six. The tenure of offiee of the elected members of these three committees was for "full 360 days" after which they had to retire.

Again for elections to the Panchavāra and the gold commitiees by the procedure already described 30 names were chosen representing the 30 wards and from these thirty, twelve were elected out of whom six were to serve on the gold committee and the remaining six on the Panchavāra committee. Since the selection by drawing lots of only twelve men from among the thirty would inevitably result in the exclusion of the remaining eighteen wards from representation on these important committees the authors of the system seem to have been not unaware of this serious drawback and they have not failed to

take the necessary safeguards. So they have provided that "the wards which have been already represented on these committees shall be excluded and the selection made from the remaining wards by drawing the 'Karai". We have again the details of how a gold committec is consituted. It is laid down that the general assembly came together in this particular fashion and chose from the residents of the village those who were tax paying inhabitants of the village. That means, the proletariat were excluded and also the wards that had been represented in the previous year. One important qualification insisted on for membership on this committee was the assaying of gold. The function of this committee was to test gold impartially for all people and to adopt certain methods laid down for the test.

Only persons possessing the following qualifications were considered eligible to be chosen for any committee. These qualifications include conditions regarding age, property and learning, besides general ability and character.

(1) His age must be above 35 and below 70.

(2) He must know the mantra-brahmaṇa and possess experience in expounding it.[40]

(3) Then comes the property qualification. He must own more than a quarter vēli (i. e. 1½ acres) of tax paying land.

(4) He must live in a house built on his own site.

(5) The usual divorce between learning and riches seems to have been recognised here also and accordingly the property

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40. This statement in the record of 921 makes the educational qualification more definite than that prescribed in the record of 919 and thus is an improvement over the other. Monier Williams gives the phrase 'mantra–brāhmaṇa' the meaning 'Mantras and Brāhmāṇas' and also notes that it is the name of a work (K. A. N. Śāstri: *Studies in Chōḷa history and administration*, p. 150)

qualifications of very learned men have been fixed at half the usual standard. Thus a person versed in a Veda in its entirety and possessed of experience in teaching one of the four bāshyas might have only 1/8 vēli of land instead of the usual ¼ vēli.

(6) He must possess a pure mind and his earnings must be honest.

(7) He must not have served on any of the committees during the three years proceding the date of election.[41]

The following persons were excluded and considered dis-qualified.

(1) Defaulting committee members i. e. those who have not submitted accounts and twelve classes of their relatives. The period of this exclusion is not specifically stated and hence we have to assume that a permanent exclusion is contemplated.

(2) Those who committed incest and the first four of the five great sins (i) killing a Brāhmaṇa; (ii) drinking intoxicating liquors; (iii) theft and (iv) adultery with the wife of one's spiritual teacher and (v) associating with anyone who is guilty of these crimes) and their relatives.

(3) Those who incurred sin through association with sinners till they perform the necessary expiatory ceremonies.

(4) Those who stole other's property

(5) Those who were mentally and morally unfit.

(6) There were persons who were themselves disqualified but did not transmit their disqualification to their relatives and this class included those who had (1) taken forbidden dishes of

41. This rule did not apply to the elections to the annual committee for which the previous membership of the garden and tank committees with the necessary administrative experience it implied, was regarded as an indispensable qualification.

any kind (2) committed sins (notably those mentioned in 2 above); (3) become village posts and (4) committed incest. By performing the necessary expiatory ceremonies they could prevent the transmission of their own disabilities to their own relatives but they themselves remained disqualified.

With regard to the Panchavāra and the gold committees two additional disqualifying circumstances were introduced viz. (1) riding on ass (which meant a punishment for some offence and hence implied a conviction disqualifying the candidate and (2) committing forgery which was undoubtedly a special disqualification for membership of a currency committee.

The comittee members were expected to take an active part in the deliberation, and eloquence at committee meetings was extolled as a special merit. The rules of debate are laid down in an inscription of the 9th century discovered in Tinnevelly,[42] which forbids the persistent obstruction of the proceedings of the assembly by members shouting 'nay' to every proposal brought before it and contains the provision that "those who do this together with their supporters will pay a fine of five kāśu on each item in which they have so behaved".

Before concluding this portion a word may be added. This complex type of administration of the Chōḷas characterised by the Mahāsabha and the Committees was clearly anticipated by the Mānūr Inscription of Māran Śaḍaiyan,[43] which contains the earliest reference to the term Variyam and which belongs to a century prior to the celebrated Uttaramērūr records of Parāntaka I (919 aud 921 A. D.) i. e. 800 A. D. This inscription is the only early Paṇḍya inscription giving particulars of the constitution and working of the Sabha and containing a reference to the term Vāriyam. The object of this inscription is to record a

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42. *M. E. R.* for the year 1906-7. No. 423.

43. *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. XXII, p. 8

resolution of the Mahāsabha of Maṇanilainallūr. The resolution fixes the procedure to be followed in future meetings of the sabha by laying down the minimum qualifications in terms of property, education and character that will entitle persons to take part in the work of the sabha. The noteworthy feature is the reference it contains to the term Vāriyam in the following words: "முழுச்சிரவஙை இல்லாதாரை எவ்வகைப்பட்ட வாரியமும் பெறுதார் ஆகவும்." i. e. those who do not possess full shares shall not be selected or shall no be put in charge of any kind of vāriyam.

It is not easy to decide whether the term 'Vāriyam' mentioned in the Pāṇḍya record refers to the committee of the assembly in the same manner as in the Uttaramērūr inscriptions belonging to a later century. Probably it may refer to some kind of specialised duty, the performance of which was entrusted to a single individual rather than to a committee,[44] and the term 'vāriyar' indicate the individual officer carrying out the orders of the sapha rather than a committee with wide discretionary powers such as the Uttaramērūr committees undoubtedly were.

Again the Ambāśamudram inscription of Varaguṇa Pāṇḍya[45] who probably belonged to the beginning of the century refers to the committee of the assembly. The king granted 290 kāśu to the Śiva temple at Iḷaṅgōkuḍi and the assembly of the village received the money and the committee of the assembly and the servants of the temple had jointly to provide for the offerings out of the interest from this amount,

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44. K. A. Nīlakaṇṭa Śāstri: '*Studies in Chōḷa history and administration*, p. 82

45. This Varaguṇa Pāṇḍya is generally identified by scholars with Māran Śaḍaiyan in which case the record has to be assigned to the 9th century A. D.

Mr. Veṅkkayya in a footnote in the *Epigrahia Indica* (Vol. IX. p. 86, footnote 9) remarks: "The expression 'śavai vāriyar' seems to imply that the system of village administration prevalent in the Chōḷa country in the 10th century A.D. was also in operation in the Pāṇḍyan kingdom in the 9th century A. D."

This was in short the type of administration prevailed throughout the Tamil country in the later Pallava and the Chōḷa periods. This system of admininstration as we have noted already originated in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam under the favourable auspices of the later Pallava rulers and reached the highest level of progress during the reign of Parāntaka I as testified by his two Uttaramērūr inscriptions of 919 and 921 A.D. In them, we find the local administration in its most perefected form. Toṇḍamaṇḍalam ever since the days of Aśoka had continued to be a stronghold for Buddhists and we have already sketched the history of Buddhism in the Kāñchī region and the literary and monumental evidences have plenty to say about the flourishing state of Buddhism there. Besides, the early Pallava rulers in general, though staunch Śaivites or Vaishṇavites do not seem to have been hostile to Buddhism while there is adequate evidence to prove that some of them even extended their support to that religion, though not to the exclusion of others. Thus even in the Pallava age conditions in the Tamil country were conducive to the growth of Buddhism and especially Toṇḍamaṇḍalam proved to be a fertile soil for the labours of the Buddhists. Under such circumstances undoubtedly the votaries of that religion must have been busy in strengthening their organisation and as a result numerous saṅghas must have been organised and administered throughout the Tamil country. It was under these circumstances that the administrative machinery was evolved in the Pallava age. If we study the origin and development of administrative institutions in the south with this background clearly in mind we would be led to

pause for a moment and consider whether the work done by Buddhism in that particular region would have wielded any influence over the administrative machinery, especially when we know that that type of administration had its origin in that particular region.

Though it would not be possible to prove that the administration as obtained in the Pallava age and developed in the Chōḷa period exhibited Buddhist influence in all its aspects, a few instances could be cited where the influence of Buddhism in discerible. There is adequate ground to believe that the administrative machinery in some of its features must have been modelled on the Buddhist Saṅgha administration especially when we know that numerous such Bhikku Saṅghas were vigorously functioning throughout the Tamil country, and particularly in the Kāñchī region. Hence the influence of Buddhism cannot be easily brushed aside.

A few of the similarities between the Saṅgha type of administration and the Pallava Chōḷa rural administration may be noted here, First of all, the idea underlying the committee system of administration of the Pallavas and Chōḷas was not entirely new, for Buddhist literature seems to have been familiar with this notion of transacting business through committees and the *Cullavagga* describes how complicated matters could be referred to committees.[46] Moreover the Bhikku Saṅghas in their internal administration seem to have resorted to some such arrangement. The secular business of the monastery was carried on through the agency of a number of officers appointed by the Saṅgha like the distributor of food, keeper of stores, the regulater of the lodgings, the distributor of robes, the keeper of alms bowls, the superintendent of gardens and so on and the most eminent among the bhikkus were only selected for such purposes. Thus the idea of carrying on day to day business

46. R. C. Majumdar: *Corporate Life in Ancient India*, p. 100.

through specialized agencies was not unknown in those days. Whereas in this case the agencies are individuals, we have in the Pallava and Chōḷa administration a separate body consisting of a number of individuals. But the idea of 'division of labour' is common in both the cases. It seems probable that this idea of transacting business through cmmittees in the Pallava and Chōḷa periods may have been borrowed from the religious saṅgha, a considerable number of which must have been flourishing in the Tamil country in the period nnder question. Moreover it is significant that just as only persons possessing certain prescribed qualifications were deemed eligible to serve on committees so also not all bhikshus but only certain bhikshus with the requisite qualifications were chosen to look after such specialised functions.

The various saṅghas belonging to the different localities were completely automomous bodies and anything like a central authority to control these smallor bodies was conspicuous by its absence and the Buddha, so long as he was alive symbolis the central authority but he very rarely interfered with the affair of the different saṅghas. So also in the Pallava and Chōḷa system of local administration we don't find any strong central authority interfering now and then in local affairs and acting as a check on the local institutions, On the other hand we see the village assemblies being held solely responsible for carrying on the administration of the villages and these assemblies are vested with supreme powers and enjoy considerable amount of independence from control by any outside body.

Regarding the procedure adopted in the meetings also some similarities may be traced. For example, when any disputed problem is being discussed in the assembly and when no decision is arrived at, it is settled by the vote of the majority and the votes are to be signified by tickets as in the case of the South Indian assemblies. Similarly the strict observance of quorum at the assembly meetings seems to be a common feature. *Cullavagga*

IX. 4 lays down the rules of a quorum and the number varies for different class of official acts. Again certain disqualifications were recognised preventing certain people from entering the Saṅgha. Though entry into the Order was as a rule open to all, practical necessity caused the imposition certain of restrictions and consequently certain disqualifications were prescribed, e. g. persons seriously affected with bodily deformities. confirmed criminals, soldiers etc., were declared not eligible to entor the order. We see a similar idea at work in the case of rural assemblies and committees in the Tamil country.

From this meagre evidence it would be hasty to rush to the conclusion that the Pallava and Chōḷa rural administration must have been tinged out and out by Buddhist influence. But at the same time it could not be denied that the work done by Buddhism in Toṇḍamaṇḍalam must have contributed something, however small it might be, in the evolution of this peculiar type of administration and the institutions associated with it.

The influence of Buddhism is seen at its best in architecture and sculpture. The Buddhist style of building can be traced in the various styles found now in South India. "The apsidal ended temple, the pyramidal storeyed temple, the waggon headed roof and the circular shrine chamber found in some temples on the West Coast are so obviouly Buddhist in origin"[47] The external design and ornamentation of the temples at Mahābalipuram, popularly known as the 'seven pagodas' clearly speak in favour of Buddhist influence.[48]

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47. *Annual Report of the Archeaological Department, Southern* Circle, Madras (1915-16), Part II, p. 28.

48. *Madras University Journal*, Vol, I (1928). See supplement to the journal entitled 'The Origin of Saivism and its history in the Tamil land'.

The contribution of Buddhism to Tamil literature forms the most important and interesting chapter in the history of Buddhism in the Tamil country. Jainism and Buddhism, the two great missionary religions have laid the Tamil language under an eternal obligation. As a result of the advent of the Buddhists and Jains Tamil literature was enriched and the five great kāvyas in Tamil, *Silappadikāram*, *Maṇimēkhalai*, *Jeevaka Chintāmaṇi*, *Vaḷayāpathi* and *Kuṇḍalakēśi* were produced by the Buddhists and Jains *Maṇimēkhalai* and *Kuṇḍalakēśi* were written by Buddhist authors while the rest were written by Jains. It redounds to the credit of the Jains and Buddhists to have produced the five great Tamil epics without which Tamil literature would not have been what it is today. We have already seen how the Buddhist monks were pioneers in spreading education among masses and how they, imbued by missionary zeal, learnt and encouraged the vernaculars and preached their doctrines in that language which could be easily understood by the masses and which could easily appeal to their heart. With this purpose dominating their mind they encouraged and popularised the Tamil language among the masses and produced many works in Tamil. We have already examined in detail two such works viz. *Silappadikāram* and *Maṇimēkhalai* and we shall now proceed to examine another important work, *Kuṇḍalakēsi*, written by a Buddhist author, the original of which is, to our profound regret, last now. We have to console ourselves with some fragmentary idea of the work gathered from the verses from that work scattered here and there in other works like the commentaries on *Neelakēśi Yāpparuṅkalavirutti* and *Veerasōḻiyam* and in a work called '*Puṛattiraṭṭu*' which is a collection of verses from different Tamil works. *Neelakēśi* another minor kāvya in Tamil was written in imitation of the *Kuṇḍalakēsi* and with a view to defending Jainism against the attack that was made by Kuṇḍalakēśi, and the main object of that work is to counterattack the *Kuṇḍalakēśi* which appears to have severely criticised Jainism. So it takes up first to set at

naught Buddhism and devotes four chapters to it. It is only in these chapters we have references to verses from *Kuṇḍalakēśi*. We can glean from *Neelıkēśi* and its commentary some idea of the type and peculiarities of the school of Buddhism as described in the *Kuṇḍalakēśi*. Thus we get only indirect access to the work and if the work itself is discovered it will, no doubt, shed abundant light on the history of Buddhism in South India. References to *Kuṇḍalakēśi* and citations from it could be found in large numbers in the *Neelakēśi* in chapters II – *Kuṇḍalakēś* vāda IV – Mokkala vada and V – Buddhavada. Similarly *Kuṇḍalakēśi* is referred to and quoted in many other works and their commentaries like the *Yāpparuṅkalavirutti*, and the *Veeraśōḻiyam*.

The author of the epic *Kuṇḍalakēśi* is one Nādakuttanā nd the story of the epic, as narrated in the commentary on *Neelakēśi*, may be briefly noted here. *Kuṇḍrlakēśi* was born in a rich Vaisya community and when she attained the age of sixteen she was put in seclusion in a palatial building and from he top of it one day she saw a young highwayman by name Kāḷan being dragged by the King's guards, to the place of execution. She fell in love with him at first sight and resolved to die if she could not marry him. Having come to know of this her father, out of extreme affection for his only daughter, bribed the city guards and managed to release him and brought him before his daughter who waited upon him. Thus they were spending happy days and one day *Kuṇḍalakēśi* asked him whether he was not a thief by profession. He was enraged at this remark and somehow managed to take her to the top o a nearby cliff and revealed his intention to kill her by pushing her down. But she wanted to save herself and by a strategem she was not only able to escape but also turned the table against him and pushed him down the great cliff. Unwilling t return home after this incident she first joined the order of the Nirgranthas and then went to various religious teachers and

became very proficient in discussion and debate. Wherever she challenged other religious teachers for debate with her and defeated them and at last she was convinced that the Bauddha dharma alone was true and joined that religion and became the foremost among nuns.

From this it is evident that the epic *Kuṇḍalakēsi* is an accredited Buddhist work and according to the commentary on *Neelakēsi* the type of Buddhism that was prevalent in South India at that time seems to be the Sautrāntika school. It is interesting to note that this theme has been borrowed from the Pāli sources for we come across in different Pāli works the story of a Buddhist nun by name Kuṇḍalakēsi, [49] every detail of which is remarkably similar to that contained in the Tamil epic. The coincidence between the two is indeed remarkable and at once arresting. As the Pāli sources we are going to xamine are much older than the Tamil epic which may be assigned to the 8th century A. D. there is no doubt that the Tamil epic must have borrowed the theme from the Pāli sources and not vice versa. The Pāli works that contain a similar story are (1) the commentary on the (*Dhammapada Dhammapādaatthākatha*) by Buddhagosha (2) the commentary on the *Anguttara Nikāya* called *Manorathapūranī* (3) *Jātakas* and lastly (4) the *Therigātha* commentary.

We may now proceed to examine the narrative contained in these sources so that it would enable us to gauge the similarity between these and the Tamil epic, The story contained in the Dhammapāda commentary about *Kuṇḍalakēśi* is as follows:[50] A rich merchant of Rājágriha has an only daughter, about 16 years of age, who is kept on the top of a seven storeyed building. One day she looks out of her window and sees a thief being dragged by the king's officers to the

49. See Malālaśekara, *Dictionary of Pāli Proper Names* pp, 355–56; also *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 57, (1928) pp.65–66

place of execution. Suddenly she falls in love with him and informs her parents that she will starve herself to death unless she can have the thief for her husband. The parents unable to pacify her, bribe the king's officers heavily and procure the release of the theif and give their daughter in marriage to him and from that time onwards she resolves to win her husband's favours and adorning herself with all precious ornaments she prepares his meal with her own hands and thus is pleasing him, After some days the robber begins to covet his wife's jewels and seriously thinks of some device to get all her jewels. He pretends to his wife that he was able to save his own life by escaping the death sentence by vowing an offering to the deity of the Robbers' cliff and also says that it was through the grace of that deity that he gained her for his wife, She complies with the request of her husband and prepares all necessary things for the whole offering and he asks her to accompany him alone to the top of the hill to fulfil the vow and asks her to put on all costly garments and precious jewels. Doing so she accompanies him and reaches the top of the hill when he reveals his evil design of killing her to appropriate her jewels. She tries to persuade him not to do so and assures that all her jewels and other possessions belong to him only but he is not satisfied. However she retains her presence of mind and asks her husband to permit her to pay obeisance to him for the last time. He grant her the favour and stands near the edge of the cliff. She circumambulates him for three times and embraces him in the front and the sides and, as if embracing him from the back she puts one hand to his shoulder and the other to his back and flings him over the cliff. Thus is the robber dashed to pieces against the rocks and killed. The deity that dwells on the top

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50: E, W. Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends.* Translated from the original Pāli Text of the Dhammapāda commentary (Harvard Oriental Series), Vol. 29, Part II, pp. 227–32.

of the Robbers' cliff observes the incident and applauding the woman for her presence of mind utters the following stanza:

"Wisdom is not always confined to men
A woman, too, is wise and shows it now and then."

After this incident not daring to return home she enters the forest and coming to a hermitage of nuns, retires from the world and becomes a nun. Having learned a thousand questions and answers she goes about the country bearing in her hand a branch of the rose apple tree challenging teachers of other religions for disputation with her, until at last in the city of Śāvatthī she throws her usual challenge which is taken up by the Buddhist monk Sāriputta who answers all her questions and then baffles her by putting one single question which she is not able to answer and finally, he converts her to the true faith i. e. Buddhism.

This story of the *Dhammapāda* commentary is exactly similar to the story of the Tamil epic in many details and the influence of the Pāli sources is undeniable. But in this story of the *Dhammapāda* commentary there is no mention of the fact that Kuṇḍalakēśi was originally a member of the Nirgrantha order before she became a convert to Buddhism whereas the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, commentary contains a reference to this incident.

The commentary on the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, *Manorathapūraṇī*, written by Buddhagosha, the great Buddhist commentator, also contains a similar story.[51] The reference to *Kuṇḍalakēśi* occurs in the 9th sutta where Buddha points out that Bhadda Kuṇḍalakēśi (the curly haired) is the chief among those bhikkunis who are swift to reach the higher insight. The details narrated in the story are strikingly similar to those in the *Dhammapāda* commentary and those in our epic. The

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51. *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1893, pp. 777–785.

Aṅguttara Nikāya story is as follows: Kuṇḍalakēśa [52] was born in the family of the treasurer in the city of Rājagriha and was named Bhadda. The same day in the same city a son was born to the king's chaplain and he was named Sattuko. As years rolled on Bhadda grew up to be a handsome maid and Sattuko became a robber. One day he was caught in the act of robbery and the king ordered him to be executed. The watchmen were taking him along the road to the place of execution and, attracted by the noise on the road Bhadda saw from the top of her house the robber and at once fell in love with him and wanted to marry him. Her parents, failing to pacify her and dissuade her from this act, decided to fulfil her desire and so gave a thousand pieces of gold to the watchmen as bribe and managed to set the robber free. The robber was taken home and was married to Bhahdha. Bhadda thenceforward adorned herself and devoted her time in serving him and thus both of them lived together happily for some time. After a few days the robber coveted her jewels and planned to knock them away by some means, fair or foul. So one day he told her that he had made a vow to offer gifts to the mountain goddess nearby for it was through Her grace that he was saved. Bhadda consented to act according to his wish and made ready an offering and adorning herself with all costly jewels went to the mountain. The robber never liked her retinue to accompany her to the top of the hill and so asked her to come alone and so she did. On reaching the top he disclosed to her his evil design. She tried to persuade him to make him believe that all her jewels were only his and that she did not differentiate between what

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52. Kuṇḍaiakēśl was the name that she acquired later and her original name was Bhadda. When she renounced life and joined the order of Nirgranthas they pulled out her hair and when it began to grow, it grow in curls through its great abundance and for this reason she came to be called 'Kuṇḍalakēśi' or' curly haired'.

belonged to him and what belonged to her. But he could not be convinced, So she planned a strategem to escape from his vile intention and requested him to allow her to embrace him on all sides for the last time. He consented, and having embraced him face to face she made as if she would embracc him from behind and thrust him over the precipice. Falling through the air he was crushed to pieces. The Gooddess seeing this act of Bhadda praised her. Never wanting to return home she renounced life and joined the order of Nirgranthas who pulled out her hair and thus ordained her. And when her hair began to grow it grew in curls through its great abundance and for this reason she came to be called Kuṇḍalakēśa. After mastering the teaching of that school she went about from place to place holding disputations with other religious teachers by planting the branch of the Jambu tree on a heap of sand and proclaiming that anybody comprtent to dispute with her might trample under his foot the branch of the tree so planted. As she was thus going about from place to place throwing the challenge in the usual fashion, at the city of Śāvatthī she came across Sāriputta, the reputed Buddhist saint, who accepted her challenge, answered all her questions and by putting one single question to her, which she was not able to answer, made her accept the superiority of the teachings of the Buddha and she was finally ordained there by the Buddha himself.

It is still more interesting that in the *Jātakas* also we find a similar story. For example, the Sulasa Jātaka story is as follows:[53] Sulasa was a beautiful woman of Benares who had 500 countesans. In the same city was a robber named Sattuka. He was one day caught by the king's servants and was being led to the place of execution. Sulasa was looking down the street from her window and saw Sattuka who was comely

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53. E. B. Cowell, *The Jātaka*, Vol. III, p. 261–62. Story No. 419

and gracious to look, loved him at first sight and thought that by freeing him if she could marry him she could give up tha bad life she was leading and could live respectlbly with him. So she sent through one of her female attendants a thousand pieces of gold to the chief constable of the city and somehow managed to effect his release and lived with him in delight and harmony. After sometime the robber thought that Sulasa's ornaments were worth a hundred thousand pieces and that he would kill her and take them away. So he told her one day that he had taken a vow to give an offering to the tree deity on the top of the mountain if he would be released from the king's guards She consented to prepare one and suggested that it could be sent through somebody but he insisted on both of them going there personally. He asked her to put on all her ornaments and, followed by a retinne went the mountain to fulfil the vow. On reaching the foot of the mountain he asked all the retinue to stop and with her he went alone to the top of the monntain and reaching there he disclosed to her that he had not come there to present the offering but with the intention of killing her and taking her jewels, She tried to dissuade him from committing this act but in vain. Her wits rose to the occasion and determined to take his life first by throwing him down the precipice. So she requested him to permit her to pay obeisance to him on all sides for her last time. Sattuka could not see her purpose and allowed her to do that and she walked round him in respectful salutation three times and first paid obeisance to him on the front side, and did she same at his sides and went behind him as if to do obeisance there and with all her strength throw him head over heels down the precipice. He was crushed to pieces and died on the spot. Seeing this the deity of the place spoke in praise of her. With this the story stop and we do not know happened to Kuṇḍalakēśi later.

A similar story is found even in the *Kanavera Jātaka*[54] but when we probe deep into the details of this story the similarity

54. *Ibid*. Vol. VI. p. 39–42. Story No. 318,

becomes loss and loss and the end of the story is entirely different.

In the *Therigātha* are included several verses spoken by her when she had been a nun for fifty years[55] and the commentary on the *Therigātha* gives her full story.

Thus it is evident that Kuṇḍalakēśi was a name not unknown to Pāli sources and she was a reputed nun noted for her ready wit aud capacity for swift intuition. It is clear from this that the author of *Kuṇḍalakēśi* must have borrowed the theme from these sources and this shows that the author himself must be very well versed in Pāli literature and must have been well acquainted with the different Buddhist works. We may again discern here the influence of Buddhism on Tamil literature.

There are other works also in Tamil which reveal clean traces of Buddhist influence. Among them may be mentioned (1) *Vimbasāra kādai* from which only one verse[56] is known so far from a citation in the commentary on *Neelakēśi*; and Gñānapiakāśar in his commentary on the *Sivagñānaśittiyār* (13th century A. D.) cites the same verse. The particular verse cited treats of the manner of the Buddha's birth in the Lumbinivana. From the very title of the work it can be gathered that it deals with the life history of Bimbisāra of Maghada, a contemporary of the Buddha.

(2) *Siddhānttatogai*, a work known to us only in fragments from citations of this work in the commentaries on *Neelakēśi* and on *Sivagñānaśittiyār*. This is a work of a doctrinal nature and deals with the essentials of the Buddhist religion.

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55. *Therigātha*, verses 107-111

56 'உலும்பினி வனத்துள் ஒண்குழைத்த தேள்
வலம்படு முருங்குழல் வடுநோயுருமல்

(3) *Tiruppadikam*, a work also not extant and as the title itself suggests it seems to be a compilation of stotra verses in praise of the Lord Buddha and his acts. This work is also known to us only through passages quoted here and there in the commentaries on *Neelakēśi* and *Śivagñānaśittiyār*.

Quite a number of beautiful verses have been preserved in citations in the *Yāpparuṅkalam* and in the *Vīraśōḻiyan* on the Buddha.

(4) *Vīraśōḻiyan* is a Tamil grammatical work of the 11th century A. D. by a Buddhist author by name Buddhamitra written in honour of Vīra Rājēndra. The examples and illustrations cited in this treatise are taken from authoritative Buddhist works. This work is of considerable importance as the outstanding example of Bauddha literary effort in Tamil in the age of the Imperial Chōḷas [57] Buddhamitra, the Buddhist author of this work is ealled Ponpeṟṟikāvalan, the ruler of Ponpeṟṟi, which seems to mean that he was patronised by the king and got an assignment on the revenues of Ponpeṟṟi for his support.[58] In the preface to his work the author says that the sage Agastiya learnt Tamil from Avalokitesvara of praiseworthy qualities[59], and even says in one of the verses in the body of the work that Tamil itself was created by Avalokita.[60]

ஆன்றோன் அவ்வழித் தோன்றினன் ஆதலின்

ஈன்றோன் எழுநாள் இன்னுயிர் வைத்தாள்''

Mayilai Śeeni Veṅkaṭasāmi *Bauddhamum Tamiḻum*, p. 154.

57. *Mahābodhi*, Vol. 50 (1942) p. 164
58. Prof. K. A. Nīlakaṇṭa Śāstri, *Cōḷas*, Vol. II Part I pp 545–46.
59. ''ஆயுங்குணத்தவலோகிதன் பக்கல் அகத்தியன் கேட்டு ஏயும் புவனிக்கு இயம்பிய தன் தமிழ்.''
60. ''பன்னூருருபிரம் விதத்திற் பொலியும் புகழ் அவலோகிதன் மெய்த்தமிழ்'' – வீரசோழியம், கிரியாபதப்படலம்

Thus these are some of the Tamil works written by Buddhist authors which bear unmistakable traces of Buddhist infiuenee. Though these works are not extant it would be readily conceded that the Buddhists had substantially contributed to the growth and development of Tamil literature and it would not be far from truth to say that the vast treasure of Tamil literature would have been much poorer than what it is today but for the advent of the Buddhists and their unceasing efforts in this direction.

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